

*By the same Author*  
**RIVER OF KINGS**  
(Rājataranginī)

VIŚĀKHA-DATTA

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# MUDRĀ-RĀKSHASA

OR

## THE SIGNET RING

A PLAY IN SEVEN ACTS

*Translated into English from the Original Sanskrit*

By

RANJIT SITARAM PANDIT

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To  
Scholars of all countries whose patient and  
unselfish labour has helped to elucidate  
the history, literature and art of  
India.





## CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. Preface .. .. .	i
2. Introductory Note .. .. .	v
3. Translation of the Sanskrit Text .. .. .	1
4. Postscript :	
A. The Sanskrit Drama .. .. .	151
B. Pāṭaliputra .. .. .	162
C. Viśākha-datta and the age of the Guptas .. .. .	171
D. The Nandas, the Mauryas and Chāṇakya .. .. .	191
E. Iranian, Greek and Chinese contacts with India .. .. .	210
F. Critical Note .. .. .	237
G. Acknowledgments and Bibliography.. .. .	242
5. Notes .. .. .	246



## P R E F A C E

THE *Mudrā-Rākshasa*, literally the Signet of *Rākshasa*, has been briefly called the Signet Ring. The play was probably written about 400 A.C. Under the Imperial Guptas there was a renaissance in literature, the arts and the sciences which revived the glory of the Maurya period of the 4th and 3rd Century B.C. *Viśākha-datta*, author of the play, was the product of this golden age.

2. The play was probably first produced at Pāṭaliputra at the Court of the Emperor Chandra-Gupta II (375-413 A.C.). The author leads his audience by imagination to the Pāṭaliputra of the last quarter of the 4th Century B.C. The play deals with the story of the foundation of the Maurya Empire by the Emperor Chandragupta, conqueror of the Greeks, and namesake of the contemporary sovereign of the author. What the drama needs is a clash of interests satisfying to the Muses and capable of delighting the audience. This the author provides according to the rules of Indian dramaturgy. He presents life if not exactly as his audience knew it; with at least many of the details with which they were very likely familiar. He goes sliding back over the centuries and brings his audience, in the Epilogue, to a point of contact where past and present are for a moment fused and Time stands balanced in eternity.

3. *Viśākha-datta* is a realist. Light as it may appear the Signet Ring is a serious play in the sense in which Mr. Bernard Shaw's plays are serious. It is founded upon ideas and the characters and plot are evolved to express them. The play has thus survived the passage of time. The author's ideas still have their significance and the play may thus be of some interest to the modern reader.

4. A search for manuscripts of Sanskrit plays, continued since the beginning of the last century, has resulted in the discovery of plays well-known for a long time to Indian scholars as well as of some lost, forgotten and inaccessible plays which thus have been rescued from chance and oblivion. Unfortunately this work was never properly organized. In the U. S. A. the Princeton University Press, under the auspices of the Dramatists' Guild of the Authors League of America aided by the Rockefeller Foundation, brings out collections of plays, more or less important in the history of American drama—a project which is intended to fill a gap in the field of American theatre research. In India, however, the work of collecting manuscripts

has mainly been left to voluntary private effort. The ancient manuscripts were generally written on birch bark in the North and palm leaf in South India. The leaves were held together by a cord drawn through a hole in the middle or through two holes placed some distance apart. Thus Grantha, the Sanskrit word for a knot, came to acquire the sense of book. The Grantha manuscripts are jealously guarded and treasured as family heirlooms. The leaves of such ancient manuscripts are sometimes divided, upon the partition of family property, among the co-parceners. And generally the owners are reluctant to sell or loan the manuscripts. Thus early in the nineteenth century only a limited number of Sanskrit manuscripts or their copies, were available in Europe. From a few manuscripts and copies, especially obtained, Dr. H. H. Wilson, first Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, published in 1827 his valuable work, the *Theatre of the Hindus*, which he dedicated to the then King of England George IV in order "to familiarise his British subjects with the manners and feelings of their fellow subjects in the East." Wilson selected some of the well-known Sanskrit plays and rendered them into English verse. The *Mudrā-Rākshasa* of Viśākha-datta is one of the plays included in Wilson's selection. There was, however, at that time no critical edition of the Sanskrit text of this play. Wilson's English version which is in verse makes no distinction between the prose dialogues and the lyrical passages. There are numerous omissions and the stage directions are dropped. Archaeological, literary, epigraphical and historical research extending over a period of more than a century has considerably added to our knowledge of Indian history and literature. The astonishing amount of information thus collected is now awaiting clarifying generalizations. So far as the Signet Ring is concerned we are now in a much better position to interpret it.

5. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century Indian scholars trained in the newly established universities began to collaborate with their colleagues of the West. They had the necessary spirit of research, enthusiasm for the advancement of knowledge, linguistic qualifications in both Sanskrit and English, and were able to appreciate and use the critical method. In addition they possessed the innate knowledge of their own culture and traditions, and were aware of the music and strength of their language. In 1882 K. T. Telang, afterwards Judge of the Bombay High Court, undertook the task of collating the available manuscripts of the *Mudrā-Rākshasa* to prepare a critical edition of the play. Among the manuscripts carefully examined by him was one about three hundred years old lent

by S. P. Pandit.<sup>1</sup> In 1890 Telang brought out the first critical edition of the Sanskrit text of the *Mudrā-Rākshasa* which was published in the Bombay Sanskrit Series, an official publication of the Department of Public Instruction of the Bombay Government. Telang's edition has been revised from time to time. The textual alterations subsequently made are to be found in the seventh edition of Telang's work, 1928, which also contains, in the footnotes, the readings suggested by Professor Dr. Alfred Hillebrandt in his edition of the *Mudrā-Rākshasa*.<sup>2</sup>

6. I have followed in this translation the Sanskrit text of Telang's edition. In interpreting the text I have relied on his notes as well as, generally, on the Sanskrit commentary on this play by Dhundirāja.<sup>3</sup> The Sanskrit text of the editions of Prof. Hillebrandt and Prof. Dhruva<sup>4</sup> has been compared and the changes and conjectural emendations made by these learned scholars have been carefully considered. Where an alternative reading seems more appropriate it has been adopted; such alterations are few and they are acknowledged separately.<sup>5</sup> The interpretation of the *Mudrā-Rākshasa* has been facilitated by the discovery of the famous work on Politics ascribed to Chāṇakya the great statesman who has been called the Bismark of the Maurya Empire. Chāṇakya is the hero of this play.

7. Early in this century the Sanskrit manuscript of Chāṇakya's lost work *Artha Śāstra*, or the Science of Polity, was discovered. Parts of this work of the 4th century B.C. recall Aristotle's *Politics* as well as Machiavelli's *Prince*. The fame of this book and its celebrated author had travelled all over India as well as abroad. The Khalif of Baghdad had the book translated into Arabic and the Arabs referred to its author Chāṇakya as "Sanaq the Indian." There can be no doubt that Viśākha-datta was well acquainted with the *Artha Śāstra* from which he derives not only his political and technical terms but the ideas and problems underlying this war time play. The *Artha Śāstra* thus throws fresh light on the *Mudrā-Rākshasa*.

8. The historical importance of the Signet Ring was recognized by Dr. Wilson. Since then the Buddhist records of Ceylon and Tibet have been translated. They contain references to King Chandragupta Maurya which tally, in the main, with the legends preserved in the *Purāṇas*, in Sanskrit literature, and in the Jaina annals. The traditional account

<sup>1</sup> My uncle S. P. Pandit edited numerous works including two plays of Kālidāsa published in the Bombay Sanskrit Series; he is well-known for, *inter alia*, his edition of the *Atharva Veda*.

<sup>2</sup> 1912. Breslau.

<sup>3</sup> 1713 A. C.

<sup>4</sup> 3rd Edition, 1930.

<sup>5</sup> App. F.

thus discovered is elucidated by the narrative left by the early Greek writers relating to King Chandragupta of Pātaliputra and by the history of the Greek Kings of Syria and Babylonia who were contemporaries of the Mauryas.

9. The translation is literal and omits nothing. It closely follows the text both in the prose and the lyrical passages. Unfortunately it has not been feasible to bring out the charm or vigour of the lyrical passages in form and matter. Translation of lyrical passages is a fine art. It entails not merely the mastery of two languages but a subtle intuition and a commensurate skill in the use of words. The only successful instance is that of the German poet Friederich Rückert who translated the *Gīta-Govinda*, an opera in Sanskrit, composed by Jayadeva. Rückert has come as near as is possible in any translation to the verbal music of Jayadeva. In this play an attempt has been made to retain, as far as possible, the original construction so that the Sanskrit style might be indicated. It is hoped that the play will be easy to read, though, if read aloud, it might sound a trifle out of the ordinary.

10. For the transliteration of Sanskrit names I have followed the method adopted by Professor Macdonell.<sup>6</sup> It involves the minimum departure from the current practice of spelling Indian names in English. The reader unacquainted with Sanskrit will pronounce all words correctly by simply treating all the consonants as in English and the vowels as in Italian. The system in use recommended by the International Congress of Orientalists is now almost universally accepted. It is suited to the requirements of specialists and scholars but is not particularly useful for the general reader. In spelling the palatal S, however, I have followed this method in preference to Professor Macdonell's for the general reader is likely to be confused by the spelling of the familiar *Aśoka* and *Śiva* as *Açoka* and *Çiva*. For the greater convenience of the general reader diacritical signs are omitted in the body of the play; the necessary diacritical signs to indicate the correct pronunciation of names and place names having been used in the list of the *dramatis personæ* should suffice. Signs are also used in the notes and appendices as being necessary for the correct transcription of quotations and references. Notes, as brief as possible, have been added to enable the reader to follow the play. The appendices called the Postscript, contain somewhat detailed information which might be of interest to the curious reader.

Bombay, 1st March, 1944.

R.S.P.

<sup>6</sup> This system is followed in the Cambridge History of India (1922) Vol. I, Preface, p. 10.

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Viśākha-datta wrote the play in Sanskrit. The Sanskrit drama flourished during a long period ranging from several centuries before Christ to the twelfth century of the Christian era. Long before the modern nations of Europe possessed a dramatic literature, which was not until the fourteenth century, the old Indian drama had developed and declined. The dramatic tradition, however, survived in India and modern theatrical representations are the offspring of the Sanskrit drama.

2. India, like China, is old and yet she never grows old. Conquered many times, she has ever conquered her conquerors and adapted and modified them to her own way of living and thinking. Civilization and culture in India may, from time to time, have decayed but they have not died as the result of their own toxins; for India never became so weak as to lose touch with her own true cultural traditions. On the contrary, her people have repeatedly shown that they possessed the necessary vitality to regain their vigour and to save civilization and culture by the art of lifting themselves. The age of Chāṇakya and the Mauryas was such a resurgent period. And again at the close of the fourth century of the Christian era, when Rome was tottering under the heavy blows of the northern 'barbarians,' India under the Imperial Guptas witnessed a renaissance of her literature, the drama, sculpture, painting and music. It came after a lapse of time during which the northern and western parts of the country had remained under the foreign rule of tribes of Iranian and Turkish origin. This national awakening in independent India under the Guptas, which recalled memories of the Maurya Age, was like a mighty wave—a tidal wave that had retreated for a time leaving wet sand and glowing pebbles to come rolling back with greater force. In the dramatic field it was during the Gupta period that Kālidāsa produced his celebrated masterpiece *Sakuntalā*.

3. In 1789 Sir William Jones, judge of the Supreme Court of Justice in Bengal, translated *Sakuntalā* into English and it soon attracted the attention of scholars in the West. Its author Kālidāsa, already famous in Indian literature for his works of enduring beauty, has since come to be recognized as the Shakespeare of India. *Sakuntalā* exercised a great fascination on the calm intellect of Goethe, who keenly desired to produce it on the Weimar stage. Goethe wrote in praise not merely of the play but also of the art of the Sanskrit drama, which in his opinion had found the law of moderation in poetry.



4. The study of the classical language of India led Sir William Jones to observe, "The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure ; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either : yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs, and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident ; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all without believing them to have sprung from *some common source*, which perhaps no longer exists. There is a similar reason, though not quite forcible, for supposing that both the Gothick and Celtick, though blended with a different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanskrit, and the old Persian might be added to the same family."<sup>1</sup> To promote the study of the Sanskrit language and literature in which are enshrined the traditions of the Indian people Sir William founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784.

5. Alexander Hamilton, who had studied Sanskrit in India, while on his way to England was arrested as an enemy alien, at Paris in 1802, under a decree of Napoleon and detained as a prisoner. He utilized the period of his internment in teaching Sanskrit to French scholars and, in particular, to the German romantic poet Friederich Schlegel. In 1808 Schlegel published his work *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*. Schlegel's efforts resulted in the publication by Franz Bopp of his treatise on the Sanskrit conjugational system in which he compared Sanskrit with Latin, Greek, German and Persian. The study of Comparative Philology had about this time drawn the attention of Western scholars who soon included Sanskrit as an important language worthy of their study and research. The early efforts of Schlegel and Bopp gave an impetus to the study of Sanskrit in Germany and since then German scholars have made valuable contributions to Indian studies and they continue to shed light on different fields of Sanskrit learning. Western scholars brought a fresh mind and a new approach to the study of Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary. With their familiarity with European classics, critical acumen and the historical method they succeeded in adding considerably to our knowledge of the civilization and culture of the people who have left us valuable records in Sanskrit. Thus Sanskrit drama, which has had a full and varied national development, especially attracted the attention of Western scholars. The study of this delightful subject has incidentally thrown considerable light on the economic, social and political conditions of a bygone age as well as on the history of India.

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<sup>1</sup> Address to the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal 1784.

6. While people in the West believe in life, affirm life and throw themselves with resolution into the tasks of life, the people of India, it is said, have been so completely absorbed in religion and esoteric doctrine that they have looked upon this life merely as a passage to the next world and have taken little interest in mundane affairs. In the Introduction to his German edition of the *Artha Śāstra* Dr. Meyer controverts this erroneous view. Dealing with this misconception he gives an extract from the comments of the well-known American dramatic critic Joseph Wood Crutch on the Sanskrit drama, *Mricchakatika*, which was performed in New York during the Christmas of 1925—"Here, if anywhere, the spectator will be able to see a genuine example of that 'pure art theatre' of which theorists talk and here, too, he will be led to meditate upon the real wisdom of the East which lies not in esoteric doctrine but in a tenderness far deeper and truer than that of traditional Christianity—a play wholly artificial yet profoundly moving because it is not realistic but real—whoever the author may have been—he was a man good and wise with the goodness and wisdom which come not from the lips or the smoothly flowing pen of the moralist but from the heart. An exquisite sympathy with the fresh beauty of youth and love tempered his serenity, and he was old enough to understand that a light-hearted story of ingenious complications could be made the vehicle of tender humanity and confident goodness—Such a play can be produced only by a civilization which has reached stability; when a civilization has thought its way through all the problems it faces it must come to rest upon something calm and naive. *Macbeth* and *Othello*, however great and striking they may be, are barbarous heroes because the passionate tumult of Shakespeare is the tumult produced by the conflict between a newly awakened sensibility and a series of ethical concepts inherited from the savage age. The realistic drama of our own time is the product of a like confusion; but when problems are settled and when passions are reconciled with the decisions of an intellect, then form alone remains—Nowhere in our European past do we find, this side the Classics, a work more completely civilized."<sup>2</sup>

7. The resemblance between the classical Greek and the Sanskrit drama led some European scholars in the last century to believe that India owed her theatre to Greece. This belief no longer finds support. In Prof. Macdonell's view "The importance of Indian literature as a whole largely consists in its originality. When the Greeks towards the end of the 4th century

<sup>2</sup> *The Nation*, New York, 24 December, 1924 cited in Dr. J. J. Meyer's *Artha Śāstra*. 1926. Leipzig.

B.C. invaded the north-west the Indians had already worked out a national culture of their own, unaffected by foreign influences. And in spite of successive waves of invasion and conquest by Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Muhammadans, the national development of the life and literature of the Indo-Aryan race remained practically unchecked and unmodified from without down to the era of British occupation. No other branch of the Indo-European stock has experienced an isolated evolution like this. No other country except China can trace back its language and literature, its religious beliefs and rites, its dramatic and social customs through an uninterrupted development of more than three thousand years."<sup>3</sup> This is especially true of the Sanskrit drama. In Asia only the ancient Indians and the Chinese had a national theatre and developed the art of the drama.<sup>4</sup>

8. The Sanskrit play begins with a prologue opening with a benediction in which the national deity is invoked to bless the audience. Sometimes, as in this play, the benedictory stanzas furnish a clue to the theme or idea underlying the play. A dialogue between the stage-director and an actress, or one or two actors, follows the benediction. It is usual to refer in the dialogue to the author of the play and sometimes to elucidate the play or the plot. The dialogue concludes by adroitly introducing one of the characters in the play. Goethe was so charmed by this Indian device that he borrowed it for the prologue of the *Faust* where the Stage-manager and the Merry-andrew hold a conversation. The play is divided into Acts; but directions are lacking for the sub-division of the Acts into Scenes which are indicated merely by the entrance of one actor and the exit of another. The stage is never left vacant till the end of the Act which is therefore marked by the stage direction 'All go out' even though there may be only one actor left on the stage for the final scene. A change of locality generally takes place after an Act is over. At the beginning of a new Act there is often an Interlude which may consist of either a monologue or a dialogue to explain what has occurred in the time

<sup>3</sup> History of Sanskrit Literature, (1913) p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "There is no record that theatrical entertainments were ever naturalized among the ancient Persians, Arabs or Egyptians; and the Hindus, if they learnt the art from others, can have been obliged alone to the Greeks or the Chinese. A perusal of the Hindu plays will show how little likely it is that they are indebted to either, as with the exception of a few features in common which could not fail to occur, they present characteristic varieties of conduct and construction which strongly evidence both original design and national development."

Wilson : Theatre of the Hindus, Volume I, Preface p. 12

intervening between two Acts and to prepare the audience for what is about to take place. The number of the Acts is determined by the nature of the play and may vary from one to seven and in rare cases even to ten. The play closes with a prayer for national prosperity recited by one of the principal characters. This is sometimes helpful in discovering the date of the play.

9. An interesting feature of the play are the stage-directions. They show how the play must have been acted. Incidentally they throw light on the dress, decoration, manners and customs of the period, on stage furniture and the like. One stage-direction, where an actor has to enter hurriedly, is "By sweeping aside the curtain." The curtain divided in the middle was a necessary part of the stage equipment and the actors on the stage were between this curtain (*Javanikā*) and the audience. The tiring room (*Nepathya*) was situated behind the curtain. Thus when an actor on the stage called to another the stage direction was "Facing the tiring room" and a popular uproar or tumult was indicated by the stage-direction 'clamour in the tiring room.'

10. The play consists of dialogues in prose as well as lyrical passages written in a variety of different meters, which usually consist of four line stanzas. Couplets also are favoured; and Prākṛit couplets known as the *Gāthā* are common. Thus the first Act of the *Mudrā-Rākṣasa* has no fewer than nine varieties of verse. The lyrical passages usually contain reflections suggested by the incidents which occur in the play. They were sung by the actors to the accompaniment of instrumental music as in the modern musical comedy in the West. The modern Indian theatre as well as the Cinema, which are largely modelled on the romantic drama, still retain the traditional prose dialogues alternating with songs accompanied by instrumental music.

11. The characters in the play speak different languages. Men of high rank and the educated speak Sanskrit which literally means the Refined language; women generally and the uneducated speak the Prākṛit which means the dialect of the common people. When a character reverts to Sanskrit from a provincial dialect the change is marked by a stage-direction. Both classes of characters understood one another and the audience understood both. In our own times the educated few in the cities and towns speak in the refined language of their province while the general mass of the people in the rural areas, and the uneducated in the towns, speak the provincial dialect. The old Indian drama furnishes valuable linguistic specimens not only of classical Sanskrit but also of the language spoken by the mass

of the people in the different parts of the country to which may be traced our modern provincial languages.

12. It was a rule of the Sanskrit drama that the harmony of the poetic sentiment should not be disturbed by anything violent. Thus there was no room for the extravagance of the old Chinese theatre or for Greek tragedy; and all plays ended happily. A murder, a scuffle, or anything considered indecorous, such as cursing or kissing, was taboo and was not allowed to be acted on the stage.

13. In pursuance of the rule of Sanskrit dramaturgy that a playwright may indicate the theme in the opening benedictory verse and in the prelude, Viśākha-datta discloses his theme in the first two verses of the Signet Ring. From the dialogue between Śiva and his divine consort in the first stanza we learn that diplomacy is the theme of the play; the second stanza tells us that statesmen must realize the necessity, when engaged in war, of curbing both their ambitions and their passions in the interest of their purpose. In the prelude there is a reference to the three-fold aim of existence (Trivarga). This conception is based on the trinity of functions of the human organism, *viz.*, moral (Dharma), mental (Artha) and physical (Kāma). It is necessary to discipline oneself in all the three planes of life, Dharma, Artha and Kāma, which together constitute the Trivarga; not merely as the most satisfying and rewarding occupation of man but also as the most important contribution he can make to society. Without the fusion of mind and body the fashioning of character cannot be achieved. "You cannot carve decayed wood" says the Chinese proverb. Nor can you with decayed character lay the foundation of a better race. According to the ancient Indian conception, which still sways the minds of men, the fourth, and not the least, aim of existence is Salvation (Moksha). It is significant that the playwright has omitted this spiritual aim and emphasized the first three aims in this political play where earthly life becomes the object of all striving and action.

14. In the last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Alexander the Great entered India from the north-west and moved up to the river Satlaj in the Panjāb. His army was reluctant to advance any further and he was compelled to abandon the idea of fresh conquests and to withdraw from the country. According to Greek writers Chandragupta, whom they called Sandrokottos, a youthful adventurer, had met Alexander in the Panjāb. Sir William Jones was the first to suggest the identification of Sandrokottos, mentioned by the Greeks, with Chandragupta Maurya. This identification has been confirmed by later research. The

account of Megasthenes, Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta (Sandrokottos), at Pāṭaliputra, known to the Greeks as Palibothra, together with the fact that Chandragupta is said to have met Alexander the Great, have made it possible to fix the chronology of the Maurya period and of the incidents of the play. When Alexander was in the Panjāb the Greek writers tell us that a mighty king ruled in the east over the region of the Ganges. This was the last king of the once powerful dynasty of the Nandas famous in legend, for avarice and hoards of gold, like old King Midas. Chāṇakya, according to tradition, engineered a successful revolution and destroyed the Nanda dynasty whose popularity had already been undermined probably by their avarice and the maladministration and corruption of their ministers. Chāṇakya, according to Viśākha-datta, succeeded in placing Chandragupta on the throne of the Nandas with the help of the tribes of the north-west and of the Panjāb under Parvataka, referred to as the King of the Mountains. During the siege of Pāṭaliputra, the King of the Mountains, Parvataka, was murdered. This event, referred to early in the play, eventually leads to the denouement. Rākshasa, ablest and best of the ministers of the Nanda, however, escaped from Pāṭaliputra and joined Prince Malayaketu son of Parvataka. Supported by Rākshasa and joined by five rajās the Prince Malayaketu, burning to avenge the murder of his father, invaded the empire of the new King Chandragupta. It is at this stage that the play begins and its action is concerned with this crisis which is described as a war of nerves. War propaganda, secret service, and counter espionage are the means employed to sow doubt and discord in the enemy camp. In the result the invader is led to dismiss Rākshasa, and the allied army collapses in panic and disorder. Rākshasa surrenders to Chāṇakya to save the life of his faithful friend Chandana-dāsa. Chāṇakya, whose aim is the reconciliation of Rākshasa to utilize him for the post-war reconstruction of the empire, offers him the office of prime minister in the interest of the State. The various incidents which comprise the action of the play combine to achieve the one goal, *viz.*, the reconciliation of Rākshasa.

15. Unlike most other early plays, the theme of which is love, the Signet Ring deals with the problems of strategy and policy. The usual classical Sanskrit play is drawn from mythological or epic sources or from fairy lands. Viśākha-datta has no room for sex problems. He deals with men engaged in war and the grim struggle for power. Apparently in such a setting the author has been constrained to omit women characters, which is somewhat unusual for the Sanskrit drama, where

the principal characters generally fall in love at first sight and, at any rate, there is no lack of erotic inclinations. The only woman, apart from women attendants, in the play is the wife of Chandana-dīsa. She brings the solitary touch of tenderness to relieve this matter of fact play; even her part is of a piece with its political theme.

16. In Chāṇakya's view, developed in his monologues, the dialogues with Chandragupta and in the lyrical passages war is only a continuance of state policy by other means (*upāya*). The road to success lies not through unlimited application of force involved in absolute or total warfare. Indeed such warfare, without calculation of cost, would be a negation of strategy and intelligent statesmanship. War must serve the ends of policy and must necessarily be conducted with a view to post-war benefit. A State which expends its strength to the condition of exhaustion bankrupts its own policy. Chāṇakya indicates that mere numbers do not count for much and an army of great size is much more liable to panic and collapse. He thus emphasizes the indirect approach to the problem of war and aims at dislocation and paralysis of the enemy rather than its destruction.

17. Although the list of the *dramatis personæ* is apparently long the action of the Signet Ring is mainly concerned with the two principal characters, *viz.*, Rākshasa and Chāṇakya. The author portrays Rākshasa as a man filled with a deep sense of loyalty to his sovereign and to the traditions of an epoch which has already vanished. His sensibility is so great that he fails utterly to understand the new men in power who are able to mould history to the shape of their desires. Rākshasa stakes out a specific goal and then develops a moral attachment to it. Such a person tends to measure his success or failure in life in terms of his *a priori* goal or end. Defeat is such an unbearable prospect for him that he becomes careless regarding the means, including assassination, which he employs, rather than alter the end set by himself. Obsessed with the desire to gain his end Rākshasa unconsciously becomes a mischief-maker. Chāṇakya, on the other hand, is a man of intensity of spirit. The author portrays him as a man calmly facing a crisis. Chāṇakya, unlike his opponent, wastes no time in the hatred of the enemy but utilizes the store of his energy in finding solutions for his own difficulties. For him diplomacy is a game of wits in which he holds the winning gambit. Yet any programme which includes a human factor is liable to go amiss and the imponderables must occasionally test the nerve of every strategist. He is austere yet able to appreciate Rākshasa,

brought up in the lap of luxury, whom he knows to be a scholar, an upright man, courageous soldier and capable minister. Chāṇakya believes in men as much as in principles. He is convinced that a nation's greatest resources are its men of character and ability. With the objectivity of a dissecting surgeon he deals with the case of Rākshasa. The roots of human incontinence are a tangled web. Chāṇakya tries to unwind the tangle and to discover what makes men desperate or willing to sacrifice to the utmost. Chāṇakya's endeavour is to train Rākshasa to recognize his own twisted emotions and to straighten his life which had become warped. To this end he makes use of the threat of force rather than the act. He succeeds in wearing his opponent by an intellectual and moral victory; for it is the only one which does not leave the victor bankrupt and desolate in spirit when the goal is won. Chāṇakya's organization is efficient. His secret agents do not know one another. He is able to inspire enthusiasm among his subordinates who are impressed by his astuteness, austerity and awareness of his own historic role and mission.

18. In the Signet Ring Pāṭaliputra is often referred to as Nagara which means the city. The Greeks similarly spoke of Byzantium as Polis. Pāṭaliputra is also called Pushpa-pura and Kusuma-pura both meaning the City of Flowers<sup>5</sup>. Patanjali, Commentator of the great grammarian Pāṇini,<sup>6</sup> explaining the use of a certain preposition has thus mentioned this city: Anushaṇam Pāṭaliputram, Pāṭaliputra is situated on the Soṇa river. This is confirmed by Megasthenes in the fourth century B.C. The city then stood on the junction of the Sone and the Gauger. In the play we find the city is situated on the Ganges. The bed of the Sone river must have changed prior to the date of the play. From time to time during the centuries this famous city has been the seat of a mighty empire and the capital of India. It is, as it has always been, the capital Magadha, now called the province of Bihar, and is known as Patna. Twenty feet below the level of the modern Patna lies Pāṭaliputra with the remains of the Maurya palace of a hundred columns.<sup>7</sup>

19. Like ancient cities words, political terms, and phrases have also their history. The term Arya is repeatedly used in

<sup>5</sup> For the legend of the founding of Pāṭaliputra see App. B.

<sup>6</sup> Pāṇini, according to Dr. Goldstuecker, lived in the 7th century B.C. Patanjali wrote his commentary in the middle of the second century B.C.

<sup>7</sup> *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report 1912-13* pp. 59, 62, 80. Patna is from Sk. Pattana—City.



this play. The early immigrants into India from the north-west, who used the Sanskrit language, conscious of the unity of their race and culture, styled themselves the Ārya or the Kinsmen as distinguished from the indigenous people of India whom they called Dasyu or Dāsa and subsequently An Ārya or non-Aryans. The Ārya or people of the "light colour" described the Dasyu or Dāsa as "fiends" and "dark-skins." The origin of the caste system lies in this colour distinction. The Sanskrit word, still in use, for caste is Varṇa meaning colour. As the 'Captive Slav' came to mean a slave in German so in Sanskrit Dāsa later came to mean a serf or servant while Ārya acquired the meaning of master. When the Signet Ring was written it is clear that the people in eastern India had long been blended and we thus find the term Ārya used in the play as a form of address for everyone as well as an honorific title; while Dāsa is already a part of the names of some of the characters in the play as at the present day. Chāṇakya calls his pupil, the young King Chandragupta, by his pet name Vṛishala, which literally means a young bull. Among the early Āryans and the Iranians a hero was referred to as a "bull among men." The diminutive Vṛishala is thus a term of great esteem and affection. Chāṇakya also uses the term Vatsa, meaning son, for the King his pupil. Vatsa literally means a calf. Unlike a foal, which soon after its birth begins to move with the mare, the calf is helpless for a considerable time and unable to accompany the cow who has to keep it concealed from its enemies. No sight gladdened the eye of the early Ārya colonist more than the cow returning from the pasture and licking her calf (Vatsa) fastened by a cord. Vatsa thus became the fond way of addressing the son and Vātsalya, the tender affection of the cow for the calf, came to mean the cadence of tenderness and thus the mother's love for her baby. In the sense of indulgent kindness it is used in the play and is in current use. Elephants, protected by armour, with turrets carrying archers were the tanks, and swift cavalry the acroplanes of the ancient Indian army. The majestic elephant with the familiar bells still looms large in our streets. The snake-charmer with the wicker basket containing snakes and his talk of spells, as old as the Atharva Veda, is ever with us. So, too, the mendicant in ochre brown garment who, for countless generations, has displayed the Yama scroll and related stories from the Mahābhārata. One of these charming stories is the legend of Sāvitrī who compels Yama to restore the life of her young husband. It has been translated by Sir Edwin Arnold in his Indian Idylls. This immortal story has recently been produced on the Indian stage as well as on the silver screen of the Cinema.

20. "What peculiarity" says Dodwell, "distinguishes India from the rest of the existing world is the strong survival of direct inheritance from the remote past."<sup>8</sup> Thus the moonlight festival referred to in the Third Act of this play is celebrated when the red-gold leaves of October are falling into the lap of the year. The Indian learns through his festivals the meaning of the seasons. The Indian system of festivals regulates life like a calendar from the beginning to the end of the year and enables men and women to live in close touch with the year's rhythm and with nature. There is frequent mention of the moon in this play. In the tropics one cannot have too much of the light of the "cool-rayed moon" and this desire is echoed in literature. "Though to the moonlight my sleeve but narrow lodging can afford, yet might it dwell there for ever and ever, this radiance of which my eyes can never tire."<sup>9</sup>

21. Political terms used in the Signet Ring such as Mantri and Amātya for a minister, Narendra for 'a ruler of men' and Mandala, a technical term for a sphere or federation of states, are found in the Artha Śāstra of the 4th century B.C. and are, in fact, much older. They are current in modern political parlance. Parishad, which occurs in the Ṛig Veda, literally means sitting in a circle.<sup>10</sup> People in India invariably sit in a circle when they gather for a village Panchayat or a public meeting. Parishad thus means an assembly, conference or association for political or other purposes. So, too, Prachāra for propaganda and Upajāpa for a whispering campaign make sound modern but in India such political terms are as old as the hills.

22. The references contained in the Appendices will show that in India, the land of the Rajahs, the system of monarchy was, as in Greece and Rome, a historic process and arose as a reaction to the existing republican forms of government. Republicanism survived in India during the Maurya period and we know that Chandra-Gupta II absorbed the republics of Rajputana and Kathiawad in his empire at the close of the 4th century A.C. The office of Rajah was itself elective in origin. The Signet Ring throws an interesting sidelight on the relation of kings and ministers. The picture of the Maurya period drawn by Visākha-datta is confirmed by the study of Chanakya's work, the Artha Śāstra, which shows that India was then socially, economically and politically in an advanced state and the Maurya institutions largely anticipated those of modern times.

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<sup>8</sup> India (1936) Vol. I p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Tale of Genji—Waley.

<sup>10</sup> Sk. Pari—round and sad—to sit.

## CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

<i>Chandragupta</i>	..	The young king of Pātaliputra ; founder of the Maurya empire.
<i>Chāṇakya</i>	..	Chancellor of the Maurya empire ; preceptor of the King.
<i>Rākshasa</i> ..	..	Prime Minister of the former House of Nanda destroyed by Chāṇakya.
<i>Malayaketu</i>	..	A prince leading an army of invasion against Pātaliputra, in league with Rākshasa ; son of the King of the Mountains.
<i>Bhāgurāyana</i>	..	Supposed friend of Prince Malayaketu.
<i>Śaṅgarava</i>	..	Chāṇakya's pupil.
<i>Nipunaka</i>	..	} Emissaries of Chāṇakya.
<i>Jivasiddhi</i>	..	
<i>Siddhārthaka</i>	..	
<i>Samiddhārthaka</i>	..	
<i>Śakata-dāsa</i>	..	} Friends of Rākshasa.
<i>Chandana-dāsa</i>	..	
<i>Virādhagupta</i>	..	} Emissary, Retainer, Courier of Rākshasa.
<i>Priyamvādaka</i>	..	
<i>Karabhaka</i>	..	
<i>Vaihin iri</i>	..	Chandragupta's Chamberlain.
<i>Jājali</i> ..	..	Malayaketu's Chamberlain.
<i>Śoṇottirā</i> ..	..	Maid-in-waiting of King Chandragupta.
<i>Vijayā</i> ..	..	Maid-in-waiting of Prince Malayaketu.
<i>Bhāsura</i>	..	Officer of Prince Malayaketu.
<i>Wife and Son of Chandana-dāsa, Officers, Gendarmes, Retainers.</i>		

*Etc.*

## SCENES

The scene is laid mainly in Pāṭaliputra, capital of India during the Maurya Empire, and partly in the territory or camp of Prince Malayaketu, during the autumn of the year of Chandragupta Maurya's accession, circa 322 B.C.

### ACT I

Chāṇakya's House at Pāṭaliputra.

### ACT II

- SCENE I. A Street before Rākshasa's House in Malayaketu's Territory.  
,, II. An Apartment in Rākshasa's House.

### ACT III

- ,, I. The Royal Palace at Pāṭaliputra.  
,, II. Chāṇakya's House.  
,, III. Same as Scene One.

### ACT IV

- ,, I. Same as Scene One Act Two.  
,, II. Same as Scene Two Act Two.

### ACT V

- ,, I. The Camp of Malayaketu.  
,, II. A Pavilion in the Camp.  
,, III. Rākshasa's Dwelling in the Camp.  
,, IV. Same as Scene Two.

### ACT VI

- ,, I. A Street in Pāṭaliputra.  
,, II. An Old Garden in the outskirts of Pāṭaliputra.

### ACT VII

- ,, I. Place of Execution at Pāṭaliputra.  
,, II. The Royal Palace at Pāṭaliputra.

The play was probably written and first produced early in the fifth century of the Christian era at Pāṭaliputra, capital of India, during the age of the Imperial Guptas.

प्रारभ्यते न खलु विघ्नभयेन नीचैः  
प्रारभ्य विघ्नविहिता विरमन्ति मध्याः ।  
विघ्नैः पुनः पुनरपि प्रतिहन्यमानाः  
प्रारब्धमुत्तमजना न परित्यजन्ति ॥

Fear of obstacles deters the weak-minded  
From risking an enterprise ;  
The mediocre having launched it,  
When checked by reverse, pause midway ;  
But men of superior calibre are warmed,  
Though, with obstacles, beset ever and anon  
And to the task, once undertaken,  
Hold unflinching.

ACT II, stanza 17.

## FIRST ACT

“ Who is the blessed lady poised on your head ? ”

She is the Crescent-moon. “ Is this, then, her name ? ”

That is how, in sooth, she is called ;

Though familiar with it,

How should you have forgotten it ?

“ I am asking about the woman, not the moon ! ”

Let Vijaya speak, if unconvinced she is the moon ;

May the artful ingenuity of our Lord—

Desirous of hiding from the divine Parvati,

That it was the Ganga,

Meandering river of the immortals—

For ever preserve you. [1]

Further,

Refraining from treading at will,

Lest the feet overset the earth,

Drawing in the arms, incessantly,

While performing the dance,

Lest they stretch beyond all the worlds ;

His gaze unfastened on any visible mark,

Lest it release glowing sparks of fire igniting a conflagration ;

May the dance of the victor of Tripura—

Thus performed with difficulty

Through restraining influence of local conditions—

Be for your protection. [2]

*(At the end of the Benediction<sup>1</sup>)*

THE STAGE DIRECTOR<sup>2</sup>—Enough of prolixity. I have been thus directed by the Academy:<sup>3</sup>  
 “You should give today a dramatic performance of the new play entitled the Signet Ring of Rakshasa, the composition of the playwright Visakha-datta, son of Maharaja Bhaskara-datta and grandson of the Samanta Vateshvara-datta. In sooth, I, too, am immensely gratified at having to perform before an audience capable of appreciating the distinctive merits of a literary composition.

For,

Farming<sup>4</sup> should yield a pile  
 For even a callow youth,  
 If seed, in well-ploughed fields, hath fallen ;  
 Abundant sheaves of rice<sup>5</sup>  
 Depend not on the merits of the sower. [3]

I had better go home now and, accompanied by the lady of the house attend to the musical rehearsal.<sup>6</sup> (*Walks and looks around*). Here is our house. I shall enter. (*Enters and looks around*). Ha ! how is this ! It appears there is a festival in our home. The servants are absorbed overmuch each in the appointed task.

For,

Here is a maid fetching water,  
 And another grinding fragrant drugs,  
 This one is weaving chaplets of many  
     colours and, behold !  
 The maid who follows, awhile, the sound  
     of the pestle,  
 At the time of its descent, with a soft  
     intonation. [4]

That's that. I had better call the mistress of the household<sup>7</sup> and find out. (*Looking towards the wing*)

Virtuous one ! full of resource,  
Means of fulfilment of the threefold aim,<sup>8</sup>  
Versed in the diplomacy of my household,  
O mistress of the menage !  
Come quickly. [5]

(*Enters*)

ACTRESS : Sir,<sup>9</sup> here I am. Please, sir, favour me by giving your directions.

STAGE-DIRECTOR : Good lady, never mind the directions for a while. Tell us whether the family has been obliged by you this day by inviting worthy Brahmanas or honoured guests have arrived which accounts for this preparation for a special cuisine.

ACTRESS : Sir, revered Brahmanas have been invited by me.

STAGE-DIRECTOR : Say, what is the occasion ?

ACTRESS : Why, there is to be a lunar eclipse !<sup>10</sup>

STAGE-DIRECTOR : Good lady, who says so ?

ACTRESS : Indeed so say the people in the city.

STAGE-DIRECTOR : Good lady, I have spent long hours in the study of the sixty four parts of the science of the stars. So, do carry on with the work of the cuisine for the worthy Brahmanas. So far, however, as the eclipse of the moon is concerned you have been misled by some one.



Look !

The ruthless assailant, in association with  
Ketu,  
Is planning to overwhelm Chandra,  
Now of full dimensions, by main force—

(*Behind the stage*)

Ha ! who, while I stand by—

STAGE-DIRECTOR :

The conjunction of Mercury,  
Preserves him nevertheless. [6]

ACTRESS : Sir, who is this, being on the earthly  
sphere, anxious to protect the moon from the  
assault of the planet ?

STAGE-DIRECTOR : Good lady, to tell the truth, I,  
too, failed to mark it. Never mind. I shall  
be attentive this time and discover from the  
tone of his voice. (*Again recites "The ruthless  
assailant," etc.*)

(*Behind the stage*)

Ha ! who is this who would venture to  
overpower

Chandragupta while I am yet alive !

STAGE-DIRECTOR : (*Listening*) Good lady, I know !  
Kautilya ! <sup>11</sup>

(*The Actress exhibits fear*)

STAGE-DIRECTOR :

This is Kautilya, the crooked-minded,  
By whom in the flames of his anger  
Has swiftly been consumed the House of  
Nanda ;

Hearing of the lunar eclipse,  
From the similitude of names, he fancies  
An enemy offensive against the moon-like  
Maurya. [7]

Let us both go away from here. (*They go out*)

*End of the Prelude.*

SCENE I

Chanakya's House at Pataliputra.

*(Enters Chanakya stroking his loose tresses)*<sup>12</sup>

CHANAKYA : Say, who dares to compass the overthrow of Chandragupta, while I am yet alive ?

Look !

Who seeks, by overpowering the lion,  
From his open mouth, whilst he yawns,  
To tear asunder his gleaming fang,  
Rubricated with the blood, fresh tasted of  
the elephant,  
Shimmering like the roseate  
Lunar digit in the twilight ? [8]

Furthermore,

Like the deadly female cobra to Nanda's  
race,  
Like the dark wreath of smoke of the fire  
of my anger,  
Is the length of my hair dishevelled ;  
Breathes there the man, anxious for  
martyrdom,  
Who would not want it bound even now ? [9]

And then,

Who would venture to traverse the fierce  
heat  
Of the blazing fire of my anger,  
The conflagration in the forest of the Nanda  
dynasty ;  
The fool, failing to discriminate between  
The measure of his own and his opponent's  
strength,  
Would play the moth to meet with instant  
death. [10]

Sharngarava, Sharngarava !

(*Enters*)

DISCIPLE : Preceptor, your orders.

CHANAKYA : Little lad,<sup>13</sup> I would like to sit.

DISCIPLE : Why, here is the vestibule, close to the entrance gate, furnished with cane seats.<sup>14</sup> Therein the preceptor may please be seated.

CHANAKYA : My son, we are worried being absorbed in the affairs of state ; this surely is not irritability which tends spontaneously to arise in teachers where scholars are concerned.

(*Sits, the Disciple withdraws ; to himself*)

How has this confidential information come to light among the citizens that Rakshasa, aggrieved by the destruction of the House of Nanda, is striving to make war on Vrishala in alliance with Parvataka's son Malayaketu ! Malayaketu is burning to avenge the murder of his father. He is supported by the mighty forces of the Mlechha<sup>15</sup> rajah and has been incited by the offer of the entire realm of the Nanda !

(*Musing*) Why worry ! I who openly, in front of the people, made the vow, which was like a river difficult to traverse, for the annihilation of the House of Nanda and accomplished it, surely am able to allay the panic though this news has now been gaining publicity.

For,

The constant line of smoke, in the directions,  
Has the semblance of grief darkening the  
moon-faces

Of youthful women, who shed the light of  
love upon my enemies,

The ministers, like trees anxious to afford  
protection,

Have been overcome; and their deluded folly  
 Scattered by strategy, like ashes by gusts  
 of wind;  
 Consuming the sprouting Bamboo, forsaken  
 by flocks of birds,  
 Scared completely like the mass  
 Of bewildered citizens deserting the Nanda  
 dynasty,  
 The flames of my anger die down, from lack  
 of kindling wood  
 Not weariness, like the conflagration in  
 the forest. [11]

Furthermore,

Those who grieved, while I from the seat  
 of honour  
 Was dragged of yore, with faces downcast  
 And the word fie! formed in their mouths,  
 Yet looked helplessly on through fear of  
 the king;  
 The same people do, likewise, now behold  
 The Nanda, together with his kith and kin  
 Hurlled from the throne by me, like the  
 lord of the elephants<sup>16</sup>  
 By a lion from the crest of a mountain. [12]

Though now relieved of the burden of the vow  
 I bear the sword of office in the interest of  
 Vrishala.

The nine Nandas, like barbs near the heart,  
 Have been uprooted from the soil;  
 Royal sovereignty has firmly been stabilized  
 In the Maurya like the lotus stalk<sup>17</sup> in the  
 pool;  
 The essence of the twofold fruit of my  
 anger and favour  
 To foe and friend alike, with an assiduous  
 mind,  
 Has justly been distributed. [13]

Nevertheless, so long as Rakshasa has not been won over of what avail is the eradication of the House of Nanda or the stabilizing of Chandragupta's sovereignty? (*Meditatively*) Oh how unsurpassable is Rakshasa's loyal devotion to the House of Nanda! While a single scion of the Nanda dynasty survives it is not possible to persuade him to accept the office of minister under Chandragupta nor to make him abandon his attempts in favour of the House of Nanda. It was due to this very consideration that the harmless Sarvarthasiddhi, scion of the Nandas, though he had retired to the wilds for penance,<sup>18</sup> has been put to death. Rakshasa, nevertheless, continues to make the widest endeavour, through a coalition with Malayaketu, to strike at our roots. (*Fixing his gaze skyward as if present before his eyes*) Bravo minister Rakshasa! Bravo learned scholar! a Brihaspati<sup>19</sup> among statesmen, bravo!

So long as he has not from power fallen  
The ruler is served by the multitude for  
selfish ends,

Should any, in adverse fortune, follow him,  
It were in hope of his restoration to power  
once more;

But those who the burden of the cause  
would shoulder

From unselfish loyalty, like you, despite  
destruction of the master,

Are not many, and are rarely to be found.

[14]

That is precisely why our effort is to safeguard you so that you might somehow become favourable and be persuaded to accept the office of minister under Chandragupta.

For,

What is the worth of an officer, loyally  
devoted,  
Yet lacking in intelligence and valour !  
Of what use, again, would he be  
Who, having the merits of foresight and  
fortitude,  
Is yet devoid of constancy ;  
Those, in whom have been developed  
The qualities of imagination, energy and  
loyalty,  
Are the king's officers, who tend to his well-  
being ;  
The rest, like his family, are maintained,  
Alike in good fortune and misfortune.  
[15]

Thus I, on my part, remain vigilant in the matter of this plan. To the best of my ability an endeavour is being made to secure him. Accordingly, in this connection a scandalous rumour has been spread broadcast among the populace that Rakshasa has caused the death of the innocent Parvataka, who was our great benefactor and ally, by the use of a poison-maiden<sup>20</sup> in the belief that the destruction of either Chandragupta or Parvataka is bound to be detrimental to Chanakya. In order to carry conviction to the people and to further clarify this matter Parvataka's son, Malayaketu, has secretly been informed through Bhagurayana "Your father has been murdered by Chanakya" and thus alarmed has been made to flee. It may, indeed, be possible to keep under control by wise strategy the rising power of Malayaketu although he is sustained by the counsel of Rakshasa. At the same time I am anxious to avoid an attack on Malayaketu

which might wipe away Rakshasa's infamy, arising out of the murder of Parvataka, which has already gained publicity. With a view to discover persons loyal and disaffected to our cause as well as to the cause of the enemy many spies,<sup>21</sup> variously disguised, with expert knowledge of different countries, costumes, languages and methods of espionage have been employed. And, meanwhile, a search is being made assiduously of the movements and propaganda<sup>22</sup> of the friends of the ministers of the Nandas. Occasion has been found when eminent persons, Bhadrabhata and others, who have risen energetically with Chandragupta to power<sup>23</sup> have been made grateful by rewards for services. While men of our own milieu, whose loyalty has been tested, have been placed near the person of the king charged with the work of vigilantly countering the machinations of assassins<sup>24</sup> and persons who, employed by the enemy, might administer poison. Then there is my fellow-student and companion the Brahmana named Indusharma. He has attained high eminence in the science of polity and the sixty-four branches of the science of the stars.<sup>25</sup> This man had been imported by me into Kusumapura, in the garb of a Kshapanaka<sup>26</sup> soon after my vow, to annihilate the House of Nanda and was made to cultivate the friendship of all the ministers of the Nanda. Among them in particular he has gained the confidence of Rakshasa. Thus so far as I am concerned nothing has been left amiss. Only Chandragupta, having entirely entrusted the burden of the administration of the state to us, his principal ministers, is ever free from care. And no wonder, for it is a pleasure to reign only when the abnormal vexations involved in

personal application to business are done away with.

Since,

The lords of elephants and of men,  
Though naturally endowed with power,  
When they have to toil and cater for their  
own comfort,  
Sink, ordinarily, with vexation. [16]

*(Then enters a spy with a Yama scroll<sup>27</sup>)*

SPY :

Bow to the feet of Yama,  
Of what avail are other divinities ?  
Indeed the devotees of other gods  
To him lose their sparkling lives. [17]

Moreover,

A man may his subsistence gain  
From a difficult person,  
Through devoted attachment won ;  
He who causes death universally,  
Through that Yama we live on. [18]

Here is the house. I shall enter and displaying  
the Yama scroll also sing songs. *(Strolls, and  
steps in)*

DISCIPLE : *(Seeing him)* Good man, please do not  
intrude.

SPY : O Brahmana, whose house is this ?

DISCIPLE : Of our Preceptor, blessed be his name,  
the honourable Chanakya.

SPY : *(Airily)* It happens to be the house of my  
very own spiritual brother ! So, allow me to  
step in, so that I may spread before your pre-  
ceptor Yama's scroll and instruct him in righte-  
ous conduct.<sup>28</sup>



DISCIPLE: (*Flaring up*) Fie! fool! Dost thou, then, claim to know the Dharma better than even the Preceptor?

SPY: O Brahmana, why be annoyed? There is none so sophisticated as to have knowledge of everything. Thus some things are known to your preceptor and people like us know some things.

DISCIPLE: Thou wouldst trespass on the universality of the Preceptor's knowledge?

SPY: If, O Brahmana! your preceptor has knowledge of everything is he aware by whom the moon is detested?

DISCIPLE: Silly! what is the use of knowing or not knowing this?

SPY: Your preceptor alone would know the value of this information. Meanwhile you might learn this much that the moon is abhorred by the sun-lotuses.

The Sun lotuses though ravishingly lovely  
Yet have a disposition  
Which harmonizes not with their beauteous  
form,  
Though the lunar orb<sup>29</sup> is of full dimensions  
They still remain at variance with it. [19]

CHANAKYA: (*Listening; to himself*) Aha! he has dropped the hint that he knows the persons who are disaffected towards Chandragupta.

DISCIPLE: Why art thou saying such impertinent things?

SPY: O Brahmana! this should actually be very pertinent—

DISCIPLE: If what happened?

SPY : If I could get a listener who would appreciate.

CHANAKYA : Good man, enter without misgiving.  
Thou wilt have someone who listens and who understands.

SPY : I come presently. (*Enters and advances*)  
Victory to you, noble sir.

CHANAKYA : (*Observing ; to himself*) Oh ! this is  
Nipunaka employed for the detailed investigation  
of the mentality of the subjects. (*Aloud*)  
Good fellow, thou art welcome. Sit down.

SPY : If your honour directs. (*Sits on the floor*)

CHANAKYA : Good man, now tell me the news  
about the mission entrusted to thee. Are the  
subjects loyal to Vrishala ?

SPY : Absolutely. Your honour having removed  
the sundry causes of discontent the subjects are  
deeply loyal towards his majesty Chandragupta,  
blessed be his name. There are, however, in  
the metropolis three persons, who command  
much respect owing to friendship and former  
association with the minister Rakshasa, who  
are unable to endure the glory of the illustrious  
Chandragupta.

CHANAKYA : (*Fiercely*) Indeed it should be said  
that they are unable to bear their own lives.  
Good man, are they known to thee by name ?

SPY : How could I report to your honour without  
knowing their names !

CHANAKYA : If so I wish to hear them.

SPY : May it please your honour to listen. To  
begin with, sir, in the cause of your enemy, the  
Kshapanaka Jivasiddhi has become a firm  
partisan.

CHANAKYA : (*To himself*) Jivasiddhi is, actually, our secret emissary. (*Aloud*) Good fellow, who is the other man ?

SPY : The other, sir, is the intimate companion of the minister Rakshasa the Kayastha<sup>30</sup> named Shakata-dasa.

CHANAKYA : (*Chuckling ; to himself*) He is a clerk so it is a matter of light moment. Nonetheless it is not right to overlook even an insignificant person who is hostile ; I have lodged with him Siddharthaka in the guise of a friend. (*Aloud*) Good fellow, I wish to hear who is the third.

SPY : The third, a resident of the Flower Square, is the provost<sup>31</sup> of the guild of jewellers named Chandana-dasa who is, as it were, the second heart of the minister Rakshasa. In his house after depositing the family for safety the minister Rakshasa has withdrawn from the capital.

CHANAKYA : (*To himself*) Indeed the most intimate of friends ! Rakshasa would hardly entrust for safety his family to those whom he does not treat as equal to his own self. (*Aloud*) Good fellow, how didst thou learn that in the house of Chandana-dasa the family has been lodged for safety by Rakshasa ?

SPY : This signet ring<sup>32</sup> will tell the tale to your honour. (*Delivers it*)

CHANAKYA : (*Looks at the seal, takes it and reads the name of Rakshasa ; exultingly, to himself*) It might truly be said that Rakshasa himself is making overtures of intimacy to my finger ! (*Aloud*) Good man, I wish to hear in detail about the acquisition of this signet ring.

SPY : May it please your honour to listen. Employed by your honour to trace the activities of the people in the capital I happened to stroll about with this Yama scroll, which disarms suspicion in entering the houses of unfamiliar persons, and managed to enter the house of the jewel-merchant Chandana-dasa. There having spread out the Yama scroll I started singing songs.

CHANAKYA : Then what happened ?

SPY : Then suddenly from an inner apartment a little boy in the neighbourhood of five years, with comely face and body, wide-eyed with curiosity natural in a child, began to emerge. Upon this there arose from inside that very chamber a confused clamour, revealing the fright which possessed them, among the women folk 'O he has gone out, he has gone out !' Thereafter the face of a lady appeared for a space at the doorway ; having scolded the little lad just as he was wriggling out she bore him away balancing him on her arm graceful like a creeper. From her hand, the fingers of which were tremulous in the hurried effort to restrain the boy, this signet ring, fashioned according to the measurement of a man's finger, dropped on the threshold and rolled on unperceived by her and having reached the vicinity of my feet became motionless like a modest bride in low obeisance. As it was engraved with the name of the minister Rakshasa I brought it to your honour's feet. And this is how it was acquired.

CHANAKYA : Good man, I have heard. Withdraw ; ere long thou wilt get a suitable reward for this labour.

SPY : If it please your honour. (*Goes out*)

CHANAKYA : Sharngarava !

(*Enters*)

DISCIPLE : Your orders.

CHANAKYA : Son, bring the ink-well<sup>83</sup> and leaf.<sup>84</sup>

(*Disciple does so*)

CHANAKYA : (*Taking the leaf ; to himself*) What should I write here ? For by this letter is Rakshasa to be subdued.

(*Enters*)

MAID-IN-WAITING : Victory<sup>85</sup> to your honour.

CHANAKYA : (*Brightening ; to himself*) I accept the slogan of victory. (*Aloud*) Sonottara, what occasions your coming here ?

MAID : Noble sir, his majesty the illustrious Chandra, placing on the head his folded palms, shaped like a lotus bud, requests your honour in this wise—"I desire, if approved by your honour, to observe mourning for the king Parvateshvara and to give away as gifts the ornaments formerly worn by him to the Brahmanas."

CHANAKYA : (*Beaming ; to himself*) Well done, Vrishala ! you have sent a message as if after conferring with my own heart. (*Aloud*) Sonottara, say this from me to Vrishala "Well done my son ! you are truly well versed in the observance of due decorum in public affairs. So carry out your own idea. Since, however, the ornaments formerly worn by Parvateshvara are precious they should be given as gifts<sup>86</sup> only to the meritorious. So I shall myself send Brahmanas of tested merit."

MAID : As your honour directs. (*Goes out*)

CHANAKYA : Sharngarava, give the message from me to the three brothers, Vishva-vasu and others, that after accepting presents of jewels from Vrishala they should see me.

DISCIPLE : If you please. (*Goes out*)

CHANAKYA : This is the latter part of the contents of the letter. What should the first be ? (*Reflecting*) I have it. I have received information from secret emissaries that in the midst of the Mlechha host there are five rajahs who, being closely intimate with Rakshasa, follow his lead.

They are :

Chitravarman of Kuluta, Malaya's ruler  
Simha-nada, lion among men,  
Pushkaraksha of Kashmira, for foes subdued renowned,  
And Sindhusena, the Saindhava,  
Megha, the fifth herein, with his vast forces  
of cavalry,  
Lord of the Parasikas,  
I write now their names ; let Chitragupta,<sup>37</sup>  
Should he dare, wipe them out. [20]

(*Ruminating*) Or perhaps I had better not write. Let the first part remain vague. (*Writes*) Sharngarava !

(*Enters*)

DISCIPLE : Your orders, Preceptor.

CHANAKYA : Son, the letters of learned scholars though written with diligent care are, as a rule, illegible. So, say to Siddharthaka from me that these sentences from a certain person to a certain person are for a message to be conveyed by him in person ; so get the letter<sup>38</sup> written by

Shakata-dasa without any address on the exterior and repair to me ; but do not let him know that Chanakya wants the letter to be written.

DISCIPLE : If you please. (*Goes out*)

CHANAKYA : (*To himself*) Aha ! Malayaketu is conquered.

(*Enters letter in hand*)

SIDDHARTHAKA : Victory to your honour. Here is the letter written by Shakata-dasa.

CHANAKYA : What a lovely writing ! (*Reads*) Friend, seal it with this signet ring.

SIDDHARTHAKA : (*Does so*) Sir, here is the sealed letter. What are the further instructions ?

CHANAKYA : Friend, on a special mission, fit to be entrusted to one's own select people, I wish to make use of you.

SIDDHARTHAKA : (*Delighted*) Sir, I am beholden to you. May you be pleased to order what commission the humble servant is to execute for your honour.

CHANAKYA : To begin with tutor the executioners to grasp the indicative sign of the wink with the right eye ; then go armed with a sword, in anger, to the place of execution. When they have understood the sign and are fleeing, pretending fear, hither and thither, rescue Shakata-dasa from the execution ground and take him to Rakshasa. Accept a reward from him who will have been gratified with the preservation of his friend's life. For a time serve Rakshasa personally. Then when the enemy is approaching the capital this is the commission which has to be effectively carried out.

(*Whispers in the ear*)

SIDDHARTHAKA : As your honour orders.

CHANAKYA : Sharngarava !

(*Enters*)

DISCIPLE : Your orders, Preceptor.

CHANAKYA : Take this message to the Police Chief and the Magistrate<sup>39</sup> from me. "It is Chandragupta's order that this Kshapanaka, Jivasiddhi by name, in the employ of Rakshasa, who, through a poison-maid, has put Parvataka to death, be expelled<sup>40</sup> from the capital with disgrace after proclaiming him guilty of this very crime."

DISCIPLE : If you please. (*Moves away*)

CHANAKYA : Son, wait a bit. "There is another man named Shakata-dasa, the clerk employed here by Rakshasa, whose constant endeavour is to act treasonably against our person ; he, too, should be proclaimed guilty of this offence and sent to the stake,<sup>41</sup> and the members of his household should be admitted to prison."

DISCIPLE : If you please. (*Goes out*)

CHANAKYA : (*Restlessly ; to himself*) Would that it were possible to take the evil-minded Rakshasa prisoner !

SIDDHARTHAKA : Sir, I have taken—

CHANAKYA : (*Elated ; to himself*) Ha ! I have taken Rakshasa ! (*Aloud*) Good man, whom have you taken !

SIDDHARTHAKA : I have taken your honour's message. I shall, therefore, depart for the success of the venture.



CHANAKYA : (*Delivering the sealed letter and the seal*) You may depart. May you achieve success in your mission.

SIDDHARTHAKA : Amen. (*Goes out*)

(*Enters*)

DISCIPLE : Preceptor, the Police Chief and the Magistrate beg to submit to the Preceptor that the command of his majesty Chandragupta is being instantly carried out.

CHANAKYA : Good. Son, I now wish to see Chandana-dasa, provost of the jewellers' guild.

DISCIPLE : If you please. (*Goes out and re-enters with Chandana-dasa*)

CHANDANA-DASA :

Chanakya, the ruthless, when he sends word  
Of a sudden to summon a person,  
Even though innocent he would be scared ;  
Then what of me conscious of guilt ! [21]

Therefore, Dhanasena and others residing in our ward have been warned by me that the good as dead Chanakya might search my house ; so they should remove with due care the family of the master the minister Rakshasa. As for me whatever is to happen, let it happen.

DISCIPLE : This way, O Shreshthin !

CHANDANA-DASA : I come presently.

(*Both walk along*)

DISCIPLE : (*Approaching*) Preceptor, here is the provost Chandana-dasa.

CHANDANA-DASA : Hail, your honour.

CHANAKYA : Shreshthin, you are welcome. Here is a seat ; please be seated.

CHANDANA-DASA : (*Bowing*) Are you not aware, noble sir, that honour undeserved causes mental pain even more than dishonour ? So, I shall sit here, as is meet, on the bare floor.

CHANAKYA : O Shreshthin ! Please say not so. Courtesy demands that people like us should thus behave towards you. So, do please sit on the mat.

CHANDANA-DASA : (*To himself*) The villain has some sinister motive. (*Aloud*) If your honour so directs. (*Sits*)

CHANAKYA : O Shreshthin Chandana-dasa ! Are the profits from increased business transactions accumulating satisfactorily ?

CHANDANA-DASA : (*To himself*) This excessive regard is ominous. (*Aloud*) To be sure. By your honour's favour my business continues uninterrupted.

CHANAKYA : And the faults of Chandragupta do not now remind the subjects of the merits of the former rulers !

CHANDANA-DASA : (*Covering the ears*)<sup>43</sup> May evil be extinct ! The subjects rejoice increasingly in Chandragupta's sovereignty as if it were the orb of the full-moon in the twilight in autumn.

CHANAKYA : Shreshthin, if that is so then from the subjects, who are contented, kings expect in return something agreeable.

CHANDANA-DASA : May your honour order what and how much is expected from me.

CHANAKYA : Shreshthin, this is Chandragupta's regime, not the rule of the Nandas. And so only in the case of the Nanda, who hankered after wealth,<sup>43</sup> was satisfaction connected with

money. Chandragupta, on the other hand, is content when you people are free from repression.<sup>44</sup>

CHANDANA-DASA : (*Ingratiatingly*) Sir, I am much obliged.

CHANAKYA : And, O Shreshthin ! this relief from repression how is it to be made manifest—as to this we should, indeed, have been questioned by you !

CHANDANA-DASA : I should be glad to take your honour's directions.

CHANAKYA : In brief, one's conduct should be free from hostility to the sovereign.

CHANDANA-DASA : Sir, who, then, is the unblessed person believed by your honour to be hostile to the king ?

CHANAKYA : You, for instance, to begin with.

CHANDANA-DASA : (*Covering the ears*) May sin die down ! What resistance can there be by wisps of straw against fire ?

CHANAKYA : The resistance lies in this. That you by bringing to your own house afford, even to this day, protection to the family of the minister Rakshasa who is engaged in acts prejudicial to the king.

CHANDANA-DASA : Sir, this is a scandalous falsehood which has been reported by someone unaware of the facts to your honour.

CHANAKYA : O Shreshthin ! You need not be alarmed. The partisans of former kings, while fleeing abroad in panic, lodge their families in the houses of even reluctant citizens. Their subsequent concealment constitutes the offence.

CHANDANA-DASA : That is, indeed, so. At that time the family of the minister Rakshasa was in our house.

CHANAKYA : At first you said 'it is false' and now 'it was there' thus the two statements contradict each other.

CHANDANA-DASA : To that extent there has been a slip of the tongue on my part.

CHANAKYA : While Chandragupta is king fraud shall not be tolerated. So, hand over the family of Rakshasa. Your fraudulent conduct should cease.

CHANDANA-DASA : Sir, I have already made the submission that during that period the family of the minister Rakshasa was in my house.

CHANAKYA : Then where has it gone now ?

CHANDANA-DASA : I do not know.

CHANAKYA : (*With a smirk*) How should the name be unknown ! O Shreshthin ! on your head is the menace ; very far is he who can counteract it.

CHANDANA-DASA : (*To himself*)

Overhead is the cloud and the thunderclap,  
Far away is the sweetheart,  
How has this befallen ?  
On the snow-mountain are the divine herbs,  
On the head is coiled the snake. [22]

CHANAKYA : Then again, as Vishnugupta did to Nanda (*when half-uttered ; bashfully*) the

minister Rakshasa will uproot Chandragupta—  
nay, do not think so.

Look,

By the illustrious Vakranasa, and other  
ministers,

Sage, valiant, in diplomacy versed,  
Royal sovereignty, while yet the Nanda  
lived

Was not stabilized; nay she did shift  
constantly.

She, now, has attained union  
To delight the world like the lustre of the  
moon;

Who, so rash, would strive to sunder her,  
Like moonlight from the moon,

From the king Chandragupta ! [23]

Moreover, (*Recites "Who seeks by overpowering  
the lion" etc., recited before*)

CHANDANA-DASA : (*To himself*) Events have justi-  
fied his bragging.

(*Behind the stage a clamour*)

CHANAKYA : Sharngarava, please find out what this  
may be.

DISCIPLE : Your orders. (*Goes out and re-  
enters*) It is the Kshapanaka Jivasiddhi being  
paraded to be expelled ignominiously by com-  
mand of King Chandragupta.

CHANAKYA : How sad ! A Kshapanaka ! Or  
rather, one must suffer the consequences of  
antagonism to the sovereign. Shreshthin Chan-  
dana-dasa ! thus does the king punish sternly  
those whose conduct is prejudicial to the state.  
So, act according to a friend's wholesome word  
of advice. Hand over the family of Rakshasa  
and for long bask in the enjoyment of royal  
favour which is multifarious.

CHANDANA-DASA : Not in my house is the minister's family.

*(Behind the stage again a crescendo of noise)*

CHANAKYA : Sharngarava, please ascertain what this is !

DISCIPLE : Your orders. *(Goes out and re-enters)*  
Preceptor, this, too, is a person, engaged in acts prejudicial to the king, the clerk Shakata-dasa who is being led to be impaled on the stake.

CHANAKYA : Let him suffer the consequences of his own actions. O Shreshthin ! thus is the king severe in inflicting punishment on wrong-doers. He will not tolerate the concealment of Rakshasa's family by you. Therefore, preserve, by handing over another's wife, your own wife and life.

CHANDANA-DASA : Sir, why make a show of threats to me ? Even if the minister Rakshasa's wife were in my house I should refuse to hand her over, what need I say when she is not there !

CHANAKYA : Is this thy determination ?

CHANDANA-DASA : This is my firm resolution.

CHANAKYA : *(To himself)* Bravo ! Chandana-dasa, bravo !

Whilst it is so easy to serve one's ends,  
By betrayal of other people,  
Who, indeed, at the present time, would act,  
Barring Shibi in this difficult way ! [24]

*(Aloud)* Chandana-dasa, is this thy decision ?

CHANDANA-DASA : Absolutely.

CHANAKYA : (*Flaring up*) Villain ! Wait a bit, thou malicious trader !<sup>46</sup> In that case thou wilt experience the king's displeasure.

CHANDANA-DASA : I am prepared. Your honour may take such action as may be in consonance with your own powers.

CHANAKYA : Sharngarava, say from me to the Police Chief and the Magistrate to arrest this villainous merchant immediately. Or rather, wait ! Tell Vijaya-palaka, the Minister for Defence,<sup>47</sup> to arrest him with his wife, son and the entire household and detain him in custody while I report to Chandragupta ; Chandragupta will himself pass the sentence to deprive him of life.

DISCIPLE : As the Preceptor directs. Shreshthin, this way.

CHANDANA-DASA : I am ready to go, sir. (*To himself*) Fortunately I shall die for the cause of my colleagues, not for a human failing. (*Walks out with the disciple*)

CHANAKYA : (*Jubilant*) Ha ! Rakshasa is now in my grasp.

Since,

To offer his life, as if unloved, he is prepared  
For the sake of his friend in peril ;  
So, when misfortune, likewise, befalls this  
man

The other, too, will fain give up his own,  
As less precious than so dear a friend. [25]

(*Behind the stage an uproar*)

CHANAKYA : Sharngarava, Sharngarava !

(*Enters*)

DISCIPLE: Preceptor, your orders.

CHANAKYA: What is this noise?

DISCIPLE: (*Gazing*) This is due to Siddharthaka who has escaped taking with him Shakata-dasa from the execution ground while he was about to be executed.

CHANAKYA: (*To himself*) Well done Siddharthaka! the beginning has been made of the plan of action. (*Aloud*) What! did he forcibly effect the escape? (*Flaring up*) Son, tell Bhagurayana to take adequate action immediately.

(*The Disciple goes out and re-enters*)

DISCIPLE: (*Gloomily*) Preceptor, Fie! What a shame! Bhagurayana has also fled.

CHANAKYA: (*To himself*) May his departure be for the success of the mission. (*Aloud; as if furious*) Son, convey my orders to Bhadrabhata Purushadatta, Dingarata, Balagupta, Rajasena, Rohitaksha and Vijaya-varman to pursue forthwith and arrest the evil-minded Bhagurayana.

DISCIPLE: If you please. (*Goes out and re-enters; distracted*) Alas! the entire administration is upset; Bhadrabhata and the others have also deserted even earlier just when dawn broke.

CHANAKYA: (*To himself*) Altogether, may their path be auspicious. (*Aloud*) Son, there is no need to be distressed.

Look,

Those who now have fled, calculating  
somehow

Had, in truth, deserted overlong in their  
hearts,



Those who linger still may freely prepare  
 to go,  
 If fain they would do so ;  
 One thing only—which by itself surpasses  
 A hundred hosts in the technique  
 And equipments for victory,  
 The glory of whose exploits was manifest  
 In the eradication of the Nandas—  
 My intellect, let this not fade away. [26]

(*Rising ; fixing his gaze in vacancy*) Soon I shall  
 overtake the villainous Bhadrabhata and the  
 rest. (*To himself*) Evil-minded Rakshasa !  
 Where wilt thou now escape ? Ere long I  
 shall get at thee.

Like the lone<sup>48</sup> rogue elephant,  
 Radiant with the force of its ichor,  
 Overflowing, in pride of power, with ar-  
 rogance,  
 Thou art loafing at thy own sweet will ;  
 Caught with prudence, for Vrishala's sake,  
 Thou shalt by me be moulded,  
 Thy worth to uncoil for useful employ,  
 Like the elephant from the depths of  
 the forest. [27]

(*All go out*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT

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## SECOND ACT

### SCENE I

Street before Rakshasa's House.

(*Enters a snake-charmer*)

SNAKE-CHARMER :

The experts in applying antidotes,  
And those who can the magic circle<sup>1</sup> draw,  
When required, and on preserving  
The secrecy of the spells<sup>2</sup> are intent,  
May pose as friends of the snakes ;  
Like those who know the devices  
For the maintenance of the administration,  
Can the sphere circumscribe, when necessary,  
For allies, neutrals and belligerents,  
And, on preserving diplomatic secrecy are  
intent,

May behave as the friends of kings. [1]

(*Skyward*)<sup>3</sup> Sir, did you ask "Who are you?"  
I am a snake-charmer, sir, named Jirnavisha.  
What say you? "I, too, wish to have fun  
with the snakes"? What then, sir, may be your  
way of livelihood? Did you say "I am a  
retainer in the royal household." Then, sir,  
you actually are playing with snakes. Since  
a snake catcher with imperfect knowledge of  
charms and herbs, one who mounts a rutting  
elephant, and a servant of royalty, flaunting  
his powers when he has obtained a place of  
authority; these three inevitably suffer de-  
struction. Why, he has moved away just when  
he was sighted! (*Again in vacancy*) Did you  
ask, sir, 'what these wicker-baskets contain?'  
Snakes, sir, which furnish my livelihood. Did  
you say, sir, 'I wish to see them.' May it  
please your honour. This is not the proper  
place. If you are interested come to these  
premises and I shall exhibit. Did you say

'This is the residence of our lord the minister Rakshasa. The likes of us have no admission here.' If so, you may go, sir. As for me, owing to my way of life, the right of entry here is conceded to me. How now! he, too, has gone away. (*To himself; resorting to Sanskrit*) Oh! it is queer. Seeing Chandragupta sustained by the sagacity of Chanakya I feel the efforts of Rakshasa are infructuous. Seeing Malaya-  
ketu supported by the counsel of Rakshasa I feel as if Chandragupta must shift from his royal place of power.

For,

Methinks the sovereignty of the royal  
Maurya is an image, by the cords of Kau-  
tilya's genius,  
Firmly held; and yet I visualise  
As if, through strategic means,<sup>4</sup>  
It were being pulled away  
By the hands of Rakshasa. [2]

Thus it appears as if the sovereignty of the House of Nanda is vacillating in the battle of wits between these two able counsellors endowed with intellectual capacity.

Between two antagonists, who in this case,  
Doubtless, are the principal ministers of  
state,  
As between two wild elephants in a huge  
forest,  
Like the affrighted female elephant,  
Going from one to the other,  
Royal sovereignty hovers indecisive in this  
land,  
And must surely be weary. [3]

Meanwhile I had better see the minister<sup>5</sup>  
Rakshasa. (*Moves about and stands at the door-step*)

## SCENE II

An apartment in Rakshasa's House.

*(Then is discovered, seated on a mat, attended by a Retainer, Rakshasa, in anxious thought)*

RAKSHASA : *(Tearfully)*

Like that of the Vrishni<sup>63</sup> was the extensive  
clan  
Of the Nanda who, operating with valour,  
Diplomacy and merit, had extinguished  
their foes,  
Relentless Fate has led them to their doom ;  
My mind distraught, with anxious thought  
obsessed,  
By day and night, keeps me from sleep ;  
Whilst this plan of mine remains,  
Like the design of a fresco painting,  
Without a mural support. [4]

And yet why need I think so ?

Not through forgetfulness of loyalty,  
Nor self-deluding addiction to sensuous  
pleasures,  
Nor daunted by peril to life, nor, again,  
Ambitiously to seek personal authority,  
Have I, under a stranger, welcomed servitude ;  
With the utmost skill I apply to the political  
move my mind,  
That the liege-lord, though for paradise  
departed,  
Might in the slaughter of his foemen, find  
consolation. [5]

(*Gazing in vacancy ; ruefully*) Divine lady of the lotus mansion !<sup>7</sup> thou dost often fail to appreciate merit.

For,

Albeit he was the fountain of joy, the royal  
Nanda,  
Forsaking him how couldst thou be  
Enamoured with his foe, the Maurya's son !  
Like the streak of liquid ichor  
Of the perfume-elephant<sup>8</sup> which dries at  
his death  
Why didst thou not, O fickle one !  
In one fell swoop reach perdition ? [6]

Moreover, Oh ! thou who dost lack noble birth—

On this earth are territorial lords for noble  
lineage renowned,  
Were they all consumed by fire  
That thou, O sinful one ! shouldst choice  
confer  
On the Maurya, the lack-lineage, for thy  
Lord ?  
Or, perchance, in mature women<sup>9</sup>  
The sense of discrimination,  
Transient like the flower petals of the  
Kasha,<sup>10</sup>  
Is, by nature, loth to discern the worth  
of men ! [7]

And, O thou coquette ! by uprooting the very recipient of thy favour I shall deprive thee of thy romance. (*Musing*) I did right in lodging the family in the house of my best friend Chandana-dasa when I was about to depart from the capital. The residents of the capital who have made common cause with us and those who had their subsistence near the feet

of the sovereign should think that Rakshasa would not be indifferent in the matter of an attack on Kusuma-pura and thus not relax their efforts. I have placed large funds with Shakata-dasa to gratify the assassins and poisoners employed by me to conspire against the person of Chandragupta and for a whispering campaign against enemy activities. In order to obtain information about the enemy every moment and to sow dissensions in their coalition the friends Jivasiddhi and others have been set in motion.

In short—

His majesty, who loved his children,  
Swiftly perished, together with his kith and  
kin,  
Through kindly nourishing this man like a  
tiger's cub.  
With the shaft of wisdom would I pierce  
his very vitals  
Should unforeseen Providence  
Not become his armour.<sup>11</sup> [8]

*(Then enters the Chamberlain<sup>12</sup>)*

CHAMBERLAIN :

As the Nanda has been churned and the  
Maurya installed  
By the statecraft of Chanakya, in the  
capital,  
So, too, has passion been churned by old  
age,  
And, in turn, the way of righteousness  
installed in me ;  
Though now the latter is gathering strength,  
Greed, like Rakshasa, still finds room,  
while I serve,  
And strives, in vain, to conquer. [9]

(*Walks about and approaches*) This is the house of the minister Rakshasa. Let me enter. (*Entering and seeing*) Hail, your honour.

RAKSHASA: I salute you, sir. Priyamvadaka, bring a seat.

MAN: Here is a mat. Please, sir, be seated.

CHAMBERLAIN: (*Sits*) Prince Malayaketu requests the minister—"Since long has your honour discarded the appropriate decorations and this grieves my heart. Though it is not possible suddenly to forget the virtues of your liege-lord, nevertheless your honour should kindly accept my respectful request." (*Displaying the ornaments*) These ornaments which the Prince has sent having taken them off his own person the minister would do well to wear.

RAKSHASA: Honoured Jajali! say to the Prince from me—"the virtues of the liege-lord have indeed been forgotten owing to partiality for the virtues of your Highness.

Nevertheless—

On these limbs of mine,  
 Abject with the deep humiliation  
 Of enemy assaults endured,  
 I wear not the tiniest decoration,  
 Until the enemy's hosts, with all their  
     remnants,  
 Are destroyed;  
 Whilst on the Suganga<sup>13</sup> is not yet in-  
     stalled  
 Engraved in gold, O best of men! your  
     lion-throne. [10]

CHAMBERLAIN: When the minister is the leader this should be easily available to the Prince.<sup>14</sup> So be pleased to accept the Prince's first token of affection.

RAKSHASA : Sir, like the Prince your honour, too, is one whose word it is not meet should be transgressed. So, the Prince's will shall be done.

CHAMBERLAIN : (*Putting on him the ornament*) Hail ! Your honour, I depart.

RAKSHASA : I salute, sir.

(*The Chamberlain goes out*)

RAKSHASA : Priyamvadaka, find out who is waiting at the portal to seek an interview with me.

MAN : As the minister directs. (*Walks about and seeing the snake-charmer*) Sir, who are you ?

SNAKE-CHARMER : Good man, I am a snake-charmer Jirnavisha by name. I should like to display the snakes before the minister.

MAN : Wait, while I report to the minister. (*Approaching Rakshasa*) Minister, here is one, who gains his livelihood through snakes, anxious to exhibit his snakes.

RAKSHASA : (*Indicating the flicker of the left eye-lid;<sup>15</sup> to himself*) How now ! at the very outset is the sight of reptiles ! (*Aloud*) Priyamvadaka, we are not interested in snakes, give him something to satisfy and dismiss him.

PRIYAMVADAKA : If you please. (*Approaching*) Sir, here you are. The minister gives a gratuity which was your real reason for getting a glimpse of him, though not the chance to exhibit the snakes.

SNAKE-CHARMER : Gentleface, I beg to submit to the minister that I do not merely live by snakes. I am, in fact, a poet in the Prakrit language. Therefore, should the minister be not pleased to grant me an interview then let him at least be pleased to read this missive.



PRIYAMVADAKA : (*Takes the leaf and approaching Rakshasa*) The man humbly submits to the minister " I am not merely a person who keeps snakes for a livelihood. I am in fact a poet in the popular language. If, then, it does not please the minister to grant me an interview let him at least deign to read this little note."

RAKSHASA : (*Takes the leaf and reads*)

The bee<sup>16</sup> imbibes, leaving no residue,  
The nectar of the flowers by personal skill ;  
When he brings it up,  
It serves the ends of others. [11]

(*Reflecting ; to himself*) Ah ! that I am your secret agent conversant with the news of Kusumapura. Such is the meaning of the couplet.<sup>17</sup> Through pre-occupation with state affairs and the mind being obsessed my memory had become blurred so far as the spies are concerned ; now it is regained. Obviously this is Viradha-gupta in the guise of a snake-charmer. (*Aloud*) Priyamvadaka, admit him. He is a good poet. I should like to listen to his selection of verses.

PRIYAMVADAKA : If you please. (*Approaching the snake-charmer*) You may please come along, sir.

SNAKE-CHARMER : (*Advancing looks around ; to himself, resorting to Sanskrit*) Here is the minister !

Her left arm, dainty like a creeper,  
Lies drooping on his neck,  
Whilst she has her face turned away ;  
And the right, though set perforce on the  
shoulder,  
Slides into the lap incessantly ;

By his sedulous endeavour imperilled,  
 Royal sovereignty desists, even now,  
 From placing her right breast,  
 To crush the nipple in ardent embrace,  
 On the chest of the Maurya. [12]

(*Aloud*) May the minister be victorious.

RAKSHASA : (*Seeing him*) O Viradha (*when thus half-uttered*) what a nuisance is an overgrown beard!<sup>18</sup> Priyamvadaka, I should like to amuse myself awhile with the snakes. Let the servants retire from here. You, too, act so that your own post does not remain vacant.

PRIYAMVADAKA : If it please your honour. (*Goes out together with the retainers*)

RAKSHASA : Friend Viradha-gupta, here is a mat. Please sit down.

(*Viradha-gupta sits*)

RAKSHASA : (*Looking at him closely*) Alas ! such is the plight of those who had their subsistence near the lotus-like feet of his majesty ! (*Tears stream*)

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Minister, refrain from lamentation. Before long the minister will transplant us to our pristine position.

RAKSHASA : Friend, relate the news of Kusumapura.

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Minister, the happenings of Kusumapura are indeed manifold. From where shall I begin to recount ?

RAKSHASA : Friend, commencing from the very entry of Chandragupta into the capital I wish, first of all, to hear of the activities of the assassins, poisoners and others set in motion by us.

VIRADHA-GUPTA : I shall presently relate. It so happened that by the forces of Chandragupta and Parvateshvara together with those of the Shaka, Yavana,<sup>19</sup> Kirata, Kamboja, Parasika, Balhika and others, who through the genius of Chanakya had formed a coalition, seething like the waters of the seas of the final deluge, Kusuma-pura was beleaguered on all sides.

RAKSHASA : (*Drawing the sword ; vehemently*) Ah ! while I am yet alive who dare besiege Kusuma-pura !

Round the rampart order the bowmen to  
line forthwith,  
Post, at the portals, elephants able to  
penetrate  
The army of combatant elephants ;  
Undaunted by death,  
And determined to strike, let those who  
scorn  
The sapless enemy host,  
Sally forth with me, in one sole purpose  
united,  
If they be enamoured of glory. [13]

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Minister, refrain from vehemence.  
The old episode was being described.

RAKSHASA : (*Sighing*) Alas ! this has already occurred. I, nevertheless, felt as if that very epoch was actually present. (*Sheathing the sword*) Ah ! King Nanda ! I recall your surpassing favours towards Rakshasa. During the pendency of that battle—

‘ Behold ! yon troop of elephants in motion,  
Sombre like the rain-clouds,  
Rakshasa ! March there ! ’  
‘ This squadron of cavalry,

Undulating like the swirling waters of  
 inundation,  
 Rakshasa ! ward off the attack !'  
 'Let Rakshasa exterminate yonder force  
 of infantry ;'  
 You sent me orders in this wise,  
 Convinced, through fond attachment,  
 That, in the capital, there stood a thousand  
 Rakshasas. [14]

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Then seeing Kusuma-pura invested on all sides and the continuance of the very great hardships of the citizens due to the prolonged siege, King Sarvarthasiddhi, being unable to bear it, for the sake of the citizens who were in that plight, passed through a subterranean passage<sup>20</sup> and departed for the penance forest ; while your forces, owing to separation from the liege-lord, had relaxed their efforts and you had gone out by way of the subterranean passage for the restoration of the Nanda regime, after testing the loyalty of the people residing in the capital who had heroically obstructed the enemy's proclamations of victory and the like, the hapless Parvateshvara was put to death by the poison-maiden employed by you for the destruction of Chandragupta.

RAKSHASA : Friend, look, how astounding this is !

As Karna preserved, for Arjuna,  
 The potent missile Shakti,<sup>21</sup>  
 Which one sole person might kill,  
 So did I, with care, the poison-maiden keep  
 For Chandragupta ;  
 She approached the king of the mountains  
 And killed him for benefit of Vishnu-gupta  
 Who desired it,  
 Like the son of Hidimba martyred  
 For the surpassing glory of Krishna. [15]

VIRADHA-GUPTA : It is the wantonness of Providence, what can one do ?

RAKSHASA : What befell then ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Thereupon when the prince Malayaketu, alarmed by the murder of his father, had fled, Vairochaka, the brother of Parvataka, was given an assurance of good-will ; and it was publicly announced that Chandragupta would enter the palace of the Nandas. All the citizens of Kusuma-pura and the carpenters were summoned by Chanakya and thus addressed : “ as indicated by the augurs Chandragupta would, at midnight, enter the palace of the Nanda. Therefore decorate the royal residence beginning with the entrance gates.” To which the carpenters replied—“ Sir, anticipating the entry of his majesty Chandragupta into the palace of the Nandas the architect Daruvarman has ornamented the main entrance gate of the royal residence by arranging a gilded archway and other special embellishments. We shall now undertake the decoration in the interior.” Whereupon the wily Chanakya pretending to be gratified, after commending, at length, the promptitude of Daruvarman that the architect had decorated the portals of the royal residence though he had not been directed to do so said “ ere long thou wilt receive the fruit worthy of this skill, O Daruvarman ! ”

RAKSHASA : (*Gloomily*) Whence could there be satisfaction on the part of the imp Chanakya ! I take it that the attempt of Daruvarman was either fruitless or had unwished for consequences. Since he, either through fatuity of intellect or excess of devotion to the liege-lord, not having awaited the appointed time as directed

engendered a powerful suspicion in the mind of the imp Chanakya. Then what happened?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Then the good as dead<sup>22</sup> Chanakya, who had communicated the information to the citizens and artisans that Chandragupta, yielding to the favourable indication of the auspicious moment, would, at midnight, make his entry into the palace of the Nandas, at that very moment having seated Vairochaka, Parvataka's brother, together with Chandragupta on the same throne made a territorial partition of the empire.

RAKSHASA : Did he then part with the moiety of the empire in favour of Vairochaka, brother of Parvataka, which had been promised?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Precisely.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) No doubt the crafty imp Chanakya arranged this news to be broadcast among the people in order to wash the infamy of Parvataka's death after having designed an unforeseen death<sup>23</sup> for this poor fellow also. (*Aloud*) Well then?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Then on the night which had been publicly announced beforehand for Chandragupta's entry into the Nanda palace the coronation<sup>24</sup> of Vairochaka was performed with the ceremonial sprinkling of water. His person was concealed by a corslet decorated with snow-white pearls<sup>25</sup> and jewels gorgeously set as if in a painting. His luxuriant hair was gathered closely in the bejewelled diadem; his broad chest was gay with fragrant flower garlands worn like the sacred thread.<sup>26</sup> His figure was unrecognizable even by those who were most intimate with him when he, by order

of the accursed Chanakya, was mounted on a female elephant named Chandralekha, usually ridden by Chandragupta, and was escorted by the officers of the royal court of Chandragupta. As Vairochaka was about to enter the Nanda's palace, the architect Daruvarman, employed by you, believing that this was Chandragupta got ready the mechanized archway<sup>27</sup> so that it might fall on him. At about this time while the rajahs, adherents of Chandragupta, were seated in the vehicles which were jammed outside, Varvaraka, elephant driver of Chandragupta, who in fact was in your employ, anxious to draw the sword-stick concealed in the golden rod, tilted with his hand the rod supported by the golden chains.

**RAKSHASA :** Their attempt was untimely in both cases.

**VIRADHA-GUPTA :** Now the female elephant, anticipating a blow on the haunches, changed her paces with great rapidity. The mechanized arch, released in accordance with the estimated original pace, fell and missed the mark and poor Varvaraka, with his hand engaged in drawing the sword blade, was killed without being able to get at Vairochaka whom he had taken for Chandragupta. And Daruvarman who, realising that the fall of the mechanized archway was his own death-knell, had already ascended to a place high up on the triumphal arch, seized the iron bolt used for tightening the apparatus and killed the innocent Vairochaka who was still mounted on the elephant.

**RAKSHASA :** Alas ! a twofold misadventure has befallen. Chandragupta was not slain ; Vairochaka and Varavaraka were killed by Providence. How about the architect Daruvarman ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : He was killed by clods hurled by the very footmen who were forerunners of Vairochaka.

RAKSHASA : (*Plaintively*) How tragic ! We are for ever parted from the loveable companion Daruvarman ! What has the physician, resident there, Abhayadatta done ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : He tackled every thing.

RAKSHASA : (*Exultant*) What ! Has Chandragupta been killed ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Minister, by chance he was not killed.

RAKSHASA : (*Dejected*) Then why did you now suggest that everything had been carried out ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Minister, he compounded a medicine mixed with a powder of potent virtue for Chandragupta. When it was being examined by Chanakya, noticing it had changed colour in the golden goblet, he observed to Chandragupta " Vrishala, this is a poisoned draught; it must not be drunk."

RAKSHASA : In sooth, the fellow is wily. How about the physician ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : He was made to swallow that very medicine and he died.

RAKSHASA : (*Bitterly*) Alas ! A great store of science has perished. Then, what happened to Pramodaka who was assigned the task of the bed-chamber ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : What befell the others ?

RAKSHASA : (*Distraught*) How so ?



VIRADHA-GUPTA : That veritable fool having obtained a large treasure given by you began, by squandering it at large, to enjoy himself. Then when questioned "how do you explain the acquisition of this immense wealth?"<sup>28</sup> he made various contradictory statements whereupon the miscreant Chanakya had him put to death by torture.

RAKSHASA : (*Dolefully*) How now! Here, too, we have been smitten by Providence! What is the news of Bibhatsaka and others, employed by us to strike at the person of Chandragupta when asleep, who had access through the subterranean passage to the walls in the interior of the royal palace and were resident therein beforehand?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Minister, it is dreadful news.

RAKSHASA : (*Overcome*) Dreadful news? How so? Surely it was not discovered by the villain Chanakya that they were resident therein!

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Precisely. Prior to the entry of Chandragupta into the bed-chamber the wretch Chanakya made an inspection. As soon as he entered he noticed, emerging from an aperture in the wall, a line of ants carrying bits of boiled rice. He surmised this to mean that in an internal passage to the chamber were men. He had the bed-chamber set on fire. When it was in flames Bibhatsaka and the rest, their sight obstructed by smoke, failing to reach the door of the exit which was previously kept closed, were enveloped in the flames and then and there perished.

RAKSHASA : (*Aghast*) Friend, look how fortune favours the dead-alive Chandragupta !

The maid, with poison tainted, by me  
engaged, in secret,  
For his death, has killed by chance  
Parvataka, the despoiler of half his realm ;  
Whilst, through the very means of arms  
and poison,  
Have perished the emissaries with these  
entrusted ;  
My plans bear fruit, alack ! of benefits  
multifarious  
In favour solely of the Maurya ! [16]

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Minister, nonetheless what has been undertaken should certainly never be abandoned.

Look,

Fear of obstacles deters the weak-minded  
From risking an enterprise ;  
The mediocre having launched it,  
When checked by reverse, pause midway ;  
But men of superior calibre are warmed,  
Though, with obstacles, beset ever and  
anon,  
And to the task, once undertaken,  
Hold unflinching. [17]

Furthermore,

Does the Shesha not weary of the load on  
his person  
That he flingeth not the earth aside,  
Or is the lord of the day without fatigue  
That he willeth not to abide motionless ;

Yet in throwing up, like niggards,  
 What one has upon one's shoulders taken,  
 Men worthy of acclamation feel abased ;  
 To prove faithful unto the end in matters  
 Which they are pledged to achieve,  
 Is for the right-minded  
 An inflexible principle of good breeding.<sup>29</sup>  
 [18]

RAKSHASA : Friend, the task which has been undertaken must never be given up—of this there is ocular demonstration before you. Then what happened ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : From that time onwards the accursed Chanakya has become vigilant a thousandfold in guarding the person of Chandragupta, and thinking that it is due to particular individuals that this kind of peril arises he has traced and arrested residents of the capital who are men of your milieu.

RAKSHASA : (*Desperately*) Tell me quickly which of them have been arrested !

VIRADHA-GUPTA : To begin with the monk Jiva-siddhi has been expelled with ignominy from the capital.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) So far it is bearable. To one without home or belongings the deprivation of domicile need not be an affliction. (*Aloud*) What was the offence imputed to him for expulsion ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : That he had Parvataka put to death through a poison-wench employed by Rakshasa.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) Good, Kautilya ! good.

The disrepute is removed,  
To be cast upon us,  
Whilst he, who might have been  
The despoiler of half the empire, lies still ;  
A single seed of policy  
For thee fructifies variously. [19]

(*Aloud*) Well then ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Then "in order to act treasonably against the person of Chandragupta he has trafficked with Daruvarman and others" thus having publicly announced in the capital he had Shakata-dasa put on the stake.

RAKSHASA : (*With eyes misty*) Alas ! friend Shakata-dasa you did not deserve such a death. Or rather, having perished in the cause of the liege-lord it is not right to lament you. We alone deserve to be pitied who desire to survive even after the loss of the Nanda dynasty.

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Why, minister, you are toiling to the end that the very cause of the liege-lord should succeed !

RAKSHASA :

Clinging to this very aim,  
And not the desire to live on,  
Have I failed, ungratefully,  
To follow the lord who has  
Departed for the world beyond. [20]

Go on with the narrative. I am prepared to hear of further disasters to my friends.

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Learning this Chandana-dasa had your family removed.

RAKSHASA : It was improper for him to have opposed the relentless imp Chanakya.

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Minister, still more improper would have been the betrayal of a friend.

RAKSHASA : So what happened ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : So when he refused to hand over the minister's family, in spite of demand, by the imp Chanakya highly exasperated—

RAKSHASA : (*Staggered*) Was surely not put to death !

VIRADHA-GUPTA : No. After confiscation of the house and all his property he has been thrown, with son and wife, into prison.

RAKSHASA : Then why do you state complacently that the family of Rakshasa has been removed to safety ? It may truly be said that Rakshasa, together with son and wife, is in detention.

(*Enters*)

MAN : Victory to the minister. Here is Shakata-dasa arrived at the floor of the vestibule.

RAKSHASA : Good man, is this a fact ?

MAN : How should I submit a fictitious report at the feet of the minister !

RAKSHASA : Friend Viradha-gupta, how is this ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Minister, it might be so. Destiny preserves for the sake of what the future has in store.

RAKSHASA : Priyamvadaka, why dost thou linger ? Admit him immediately.

MAN : If you please. (*Goes out*)

*(Enter Shakata-dasa and Siddharthaka)*

SHAKATA-DASA : *(To himself)*

I looked on while the stake for impalement,  
Like the Maurya, secured a foot-hold in  
the soil  
And, like his sovereignty soul-destroying,  
was fastened  
On my head the felon's wreath ;  
I hearkened to the fearful rattle,  
Of the hangman's drum, which jarred  
Like the fall of the liege-lord ; and yet  
My wits, hardened by knocks previously  
borne,  
Are unshattered !

[21]

*(Advancing and seeing ; brightly)* Here is the  
minister Rakshasa !

He who,

With unflagging fidelity,  
Though the Nanda has waned,  
Sustains the cause of the lord ;  
He is a person outstanding, on earth,  
In the highest measure  
Among loyal devotees of the liege-lord. [22]

*(Approaching)* May the minister be victorious.

RAKSHASA : *(Seeing ; joyfully)* Though you had  
fallen under the observation of Kautilya I have  
fortunately been able to set eyes on you. So,  
embrace me.<sup>30</sup>

*(Shakata-dasa does so)*

RAKSHASA : *(Embracing long)* Here is a seat ;  
please be seated. *(Shakata-dasa sits)* Who is the  
cause of such heart's joy for me ?

SHAKATA-DASA : (*Pointing to Siddharthaka*) By this dear friend Siddharthaka, after he had scattered the executioners, I was carried off from the place of execution.

RAKSHASA : (*Beaming*) Friend Siddharthaka, how can there be an adequate recompense for such a good turn ? Nevertheless please accept—(*Taking from his own person offers the ornaments*)

SIDDHARTHAKA : (*Accepts, falls at his feet ; to himself*) Such, of course, are the instructions of the Arya. That's that. I shall act accordingly. (*Aloud*) Minister, as a person who has been admitted here for the first time I am familiar with no one. So, I shall place in safe custody this present of the minister and be free from care. I should, therefore, like to deposit the sealed packet in the minister's treasury after sealing it with this signet ring. I shall take it when I have need for it.

RAKSHASA : Good man, where is the harm ? Shakata-dasa, you may do so,

SHAKATA-DASA : If the minister directs. (*Looking at the seal*) Minister, this seal has your name engraved on it !

RAKSHASA : (*Scanning ; to himself*) In sooth, when I was about to depart from the capital the Brahmani,<sup>81</sup> to allay anxiety and while away the tedium, took it from my hand. Then how has it fallen into the hand of this man ! (*Aloud*) Friend Siddharthaka, from whom did you acquire the seal ?

SIDDHARTHAKA : There lives in Kusuma-pura a pearl merchant named Chandana-dasa. I found it lying in the vicinity of his entrance gate.

RAKSHASA : That is plausible.

SIDDHARTHAKA : Minister, what is plausible in this ?

RAKSHASA : That such things might be found fallen in the premises of men of great wealth.

SHAKATA-DASA : Friend Siddharthaka, this seal has engraved on it the name of the minister. So, the minister will gratify you with money far exceeding the value of this. You may give it up.

SIDDHARTHAKA : Sir, it would, indeed, be a favour should the minister deign to accept it. (*Delivers the signet ring*)

RAKSHASA : Friend Shakata-dasa, with this very seal you may transact the business of your own office.

SHAKATA-DASA : As the minister directs.

SIDDHARTHAKA : I wish to make an humble submission.

RAKSHASA : You may speak with assurance.

SIDDHARTHAKA : The minister knows too well that after doing an act prejudicial to the wicked Chanakya there is no entry into Pataliputra. My only desire is to serve the feet of the minister.

RAKSHASA : Good man, we are agreeable. Why, this was our own proposal which was undisclosed since we were unaware of your plans.

SIDDHARTHAKA : (*Brightening*) I am obliged.

RAKSHASA : Shakata-dasa, see that Siddharthaka has repose.

SHAKATA-DASA : If you please. (*Goes out with Siddharthaka*)



RAKSHASA : Friend Viradha-gupta, relate the rest of the news. Do the officers of Chandragupta put up with our whispering propaganda ?<sup>82</sup>

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Minister, they surely do ; as far as it has come to light they even react to it.

RAKSHASA : Friend, what is the reason for it ?

VIRADHA-GUPTA : Minister, so much has gained publicity. Since the defection of Malayaketu Chandragupta has been displeased with Chanakya ; Chanakya, too, arrogantly putting on airs as a victor, finds Chandragupta insufferable and is piling up the mental agony of Chandragupta by breaches of all manner of royal commands. And this, to my knowledge, is true.

RAKSHASA : (*Exultant*) Friend Viradha-gupta, go once more in this same guise of a snake-charmer to Kusuma-pura. There my good friend, Stanakalasa, lives disguised as a minstrel. To him you should say from me—"in the matter of any breach of orders committed by Chanakya, Chandragupta should be informed by recital of verses capable of inciting him. And the result of the mission should be communicated very secretly through the agency of Karabhaka."

VIRADHA-GUPTA : As the minister orders. (*Goes out*)

(*Enters*)

MAN : Minister, Shakata-dasa submits—"Here are these three sets of ornaments for sale. May the minister be pleased to set eyes on them."

RAKSHASA : (*Looking closely*) Oh ! these are ornaments of great value. Good man, say to Shakata-dasa from me that he should buy them and see that the seller is gratified.

MAN : If you please. (*Goes out*)

RAKSHASA : Meanwhile, I had better despatch  
Karabhaka to Kusuma-pura. (*Rising*) Would  
that the villain Chanakya were to fall out with  
Chandragupta !

The Maurya conceives in his glory  
He has all rulers at his behest  
On the earth's surface ;  
And Chanakya with like arrogance, vaunts  
"It is my support has made this man a  
king."  
The one, acquiring kingcraft, has reaped his  
ambition,  
The other the ocean of his avowed goal  
has crossed,  
Their aims achieved little remains to bind  
them,  
Which itself, when scope is found will lead,  
By breach inevitable in their friendship,  
To a parting of their ways. [23]

(*All go out*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT

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### THIRD ACT

#### SCENE I

The Royal Palace at Pataliputra.

(*Enters the Chamberlain*)

CHAMBERLAIN : (*Ruefully*)

Beauty of form and like delight of the  
senses,  
Through organs perceived, had yielded  
personal gratification,  
The functioning of these—the eyes and  
the rest—  
Is so impaired that they no more  
Sense the pleasures in their own spheres ;  
The limbs, which once were wont  
To yield obedience to my will,  
Are perforce forsaking agility ;  
On my very head has old age set her foot,  
O thirst! for pleasures! in vain dost thou  
pine. [1]

(*Walks about ; skyward*) O you people in charge  
of the Suganga palace! His majesty Chandra-  
gupta, blessed be his name, commands in this  
wise—"I wish to see the city of Kusuma-pura  
present a lovely appearance during the celebra-  
tion of the moonlight fête.<sup>2</sup> So decorate the  
terraces of the Suganga palace so that they might  
be a worthy sight." (*Again, in vacancy*) What  
say you?—"Sir, is his majesty unaware that  
the moonlight festival has been prohibited?"  
Ah! you smitten by Providence! how are  
you concerned with these tales and the lurking  
allusions which might swiftly deprive you of  
life? Now then, be quick!

Let the loveliness of the white yak-tails,<sup>3</sup>  
 Radiant like the cluster of moon-beams,  
 Cling to the pillars, twined with flowery  
     wreaths,  
 And redolent with the aroma  
 Of the curling incense ;  
 And let the earth, in a swoon, from bearing  
 For long the burden of the lion-throne,  
 Be forthwith refreshed  
 By the spraying of sandal water mingled  
     with flowers.<sup>4</sup> [2]

What did you say ?—"The royal command  
 shall be immediately carried out." Good folks !  
 hurry. Here is his majesty already arriving.

With limbs tenaciously resilient,  
 Unflinching even in paths which were  
     rugged,  
 For long was the yoke<sup>5</sup> on the shoulders,  
 Though cumbersome, borne by his elders ;  
 This very yoke to bear at an early age he is  
     striving ;  
 Mettlesome, like a young bull being mould-  
     ed,  
 He nor falters nor feels it irksome. [3]

*(Behind the Stage)*

This way, Sire.

*(Enters the King and the Maid-in-waiting)*

KING : (*To himself*) Actually, kingship is, for the  
 ruler of men who is intent on acting in pursu-  
 ance of the duties of royalty, a status of mighty  
 discomfort.

Absorbed in other-regarding tasks,  
 A king becomes remote from self-regarding  
 impulses ;  
 Renouncing self-interest ' the lord of the  
 earth '  
 Inevitably becomes an epithet  
 Minus its peculiar significance ;  
 Were altruism favoured more than self-  
 interest,  
 He alas ! becomes a dependant of others ;<sup>6</sup>  
 And a dependent person—how, indeed,  
 Should he know the taste of happiness ?  
 [4]

Moreover, royal sovereignty is difficult to  
 propitiate even for self-regarding kings.

For,

From the haughty she recoils,  
 Would rather not abide with the soft-shell  
 Being scared of discomfiture ;  
 She disdains the fools, yet to the very  
 learned  
 Will make no overtures of intimacy ;  
 By the valiant, too, she is much alarmed  
 And O ! she does deride the very timorous ;  
 Like a woman of the town, who has gained  
 publicity,  
 Is royal sovereignty, often difficult to  
 humour.  
 [5]

Furthermore, the Arya has directed that after  
 a feigned quarrel I should, for some length of  
 time, conduct the affairs of state independently.  
 This, I feel, as if it were a kind of sin. Or,  
 perhaps, since our understanding is constantly  
 being improved by his advice we have always  
 been, in fact, independent.

Since,

In this life, pursuing a course of righteous  
conduct,  
A disciple is unhindered ;  
Should he stray from the course, deluded,  
Then might the preceptor use the goad ;  
Thus are the virtuous, their tasks  
Conforming to good conduct, ever un-  
curbed ;  
Beyond this principle we rather would  
Keep the face averted from independent  
actions. [6]

(*Aloud*) Good Vaihinari, show the way to Suganga.

CHAMBERLAIN : This way, Sire. This is Suganga  
palace. May your majesty ascend gradually.

KING : ( *Climbing and looking at the skies* ) Oh  
what a gorgeous view of the horizon with its  
loveliness enhanced by the autumn season !

For,

The flowing rivers, gradually getting slim-  
mer,  
Are radiant with the sand-banks,  
Crowded, everywhere, with flocks of the  
Sarasa  
With their tuneful cries, and spangled  
With the picturesque full-blown lotuses ;  
They resemble the directions in their long  
stretches,  
With the silver cloudlets and the Sarasa in  
flight,  
Crying harmoniously, and clusters  
Of constellations bright, grouped beauti-  
fully,  
In the evening sky. [7]

And then,

The surging waters, yielding to advice,  
 Are staying within the stable course ;  
 The paddy, bearing the noble crop,  
 Is taught to bend with humility ;  
 From the peacocks, too, conceit, sharp like  
     a poison,  
 Is being removed ; it is amazing !  
 How the entire world is mellowed  
 As it were to good behaviour by autumn !  
[8]

And Milady? also !

At her lord, for being in love with many  
     a sweetheart,  
 She had frowned turbid with rage ;  
 Grown emaciated she is, with difficulty,  
 Induced to descend to the right course ;  
 Like a woman intercessor, cunning  
 In recounting tales of love-affairs,  
 Autumn leads the Ganga, to the lord of  
     the rivers,  
 Restored to serenity. [9]

*(Looking around)* Oh ! how is it that in Kusuma-  
 pura there are no preparations for the moonlight  
 fête ? Gentle Vaihinari, was our order for  
 the moonlight celebration in Kusuma-pura  
 promulgated ?

CHAMBERLAIN : Assuredly.

KING : Then why was our word of command not  
 accepted by the citizens ?

CHAMBERLAIN : *(Covering the ears)* May evil be  
 extinct ! The command of your majesty which  
 hitherto has not faltered on earth, how can it  
 fail among the citizens !

KING : Then how is it that Kusuma-pura, even to this day, is without preparations for the moonlight festival ?

By gay deceivers<sup>8</sup> attended,  
 Adepts in conversation animated,  
 And quick repartee,  
 The courtesans<sup>9</sup> have not  
 The streets embellished  
 With their leisurely walk  
 Encumbered by the fullness of the hips ;  
 Nor are prominent citizens,  
 Masters of their own homes,  
 With each other vying, free from mis-  
 givings,  
 To enjoy, in company with their wives,  
 The mirth and delights of the festive season.  
 [10]

CHAMBERLAIN : That is exactly how it is.

KING : What do you mean ?

CHAMBERLAIN : This, Sire.

KING : Speak plainly.

CHAMBERLAIN : The moonlight carnival has been forbidden.

KING : (*Nettled*) Ah ! by whom ?

CHAMBERLAIN : Sire, I beg to submit it is not possible to say beyond this.

KING : Surely the honourable Chanakya has not deprived the spectators' eyes of a perfectly gorgeous sight !



CHAMBERLAIN : Sire, who else, desirous of life, would dare to transgress your majesty's command ?

KING : Sonottara, I wish to sit.

MAID : Sire, here is the lion-throne.

KING : (*Sitting*) Good Vaihinari, I should like to see the honourable Chanakya.

CHAMBERLAIN : If your majesty orders. (*Goes out*)

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## SCENE II

### Chanakya's House.

*(Then is discovered Chanakya, seated in his own house displaying anxiety mingled with anger)*

CHANAKYA :

How now ! the miscreant Rakshasa is  
emulating me !

As the injured Kautilya,  
Like a snake,<sup>10</sup> slipped out of the city  
And annihilated the Nanda to crown the  
Maurya Vrishala,

So, too, shall I snatch fortune  
From the moonlike Maurya ;  
Resolved in this wise he strives to excel,  
By his wit, the superiority of my intellect.  
[11]

*(Fixing the gaze in vacancy)* Rakshasa ! refrain  
from this behaviour.

Overflowing with pride this is no Nanda,  
The onerous duties of whose empire  
Were, by evil ministers, supervised,  
It is Chandragupta ;  
Nor are you, by any means, Chanakya ;  
The only similarity in your imitation of me,  
Is hostility to the principal personage. [12]

*(Ruminatively)* Or, perhaps, I need not trouble  
my mind overmuch in this matter.

Since,

With the infiltration of my servants,  
Who have gained entry to his heart,  
Is restrained that son of the hill ruler ;  
Siddharthaka, and other emissaries, are  
engaged

Sedulously in scoring success,  
 Each in his appointed task ;  
 Presently, arranging a spurious dissension,  
 With the moonlike Maurya,  
 I, skilful in sowing discord,  
 Shall divide, through strategy,  
 The hostile Rakshasa from the enemy. [13]

*(Enters)*

CHAMBERLAIN : Service is indeed irksome.

One must needs be in awe of the king,  
 Then of the minister, and then  
 Of those beloved of royalty  
 Of others, too, companions of his lighter  
     hours,  
 The sycophants<sup>11</sup> who in the palace dwell  
 Having gained his favour ;  
 Abjectly must one, at the faces of others,  
     look,  
 Talk with adulation lightheartedly,  
 And toil for one's morsel of food ;  
 A life of servitude, causing humiliation,  
 Has rightly been held  
 To be the livelihood of a dog  
 By cultivated minds. [14]

*(Walking about and looking)*

This is the honourable Chanakya's house. I  
 had better enter. *(Entering and seeing)*  
 Heigho ! the splendour<sup>12</sup> of the minister of the  
 paramount king of kings !

And so,

Here is the segment of a stone,  
 The cow-pats to divide,  
 There fetched by the little lads  
 Is a pile of the Kusha<sup>13</sup> grass ;

And the house with its ancient walls,  
 And a thatched roof, drooping at the corner  
 With the weight of the sacrificial fuel,  
 Put out to dry, affords him shelter. [15]

So, it is in the fitness of things that for him his  
 majesty Chandragupta is merely Vrishala.

Since,

They acclaim with tireless mouths  
 The lord of the realm for virtues he does  
 not have ;  
 The needy, through abasement, even talk  
 glibly  
 Though they be men unaccustomed  
 To tell untruths ; the root of all this,  
 In sooth, is the compelling force of thirstful  
 greed ;  
 Else to those who from desire are free  
 The ruler, like a wisp of straw,  
 Is an object of disdain. [16]

(*Seeing ; nervously*) Ha ! here is the honourable  
 Chanakya.

Whilst in this world he triumphed,  
 The setting and the rising of the two kings—  
 The Nanda and the Maurya—  
 Were not disparate in time ;  
 Thus he, by his splendour, excels  
 The lustre of the thousand-rayed sun,  
 Which failing in omnipresence,  
 Sheds warmth on half the globe  
 And leaves it cold by turns ! [17]

(*Kneeling on the floor*) May your honour be  
 victorious.

CHANAKYA : Vaihinari, what is the occasion for  
 your coming here ?

CHAMBERLAIN : His majesty Chandragupta, blessed be his name, whose lotus-like feet are rendered pink by facets of the iridescent rubies in rows in the diadems of rulers, tremulously bending in obeisance, bows his head before your honour and requests "When free, in the interval between different activities, I wish to see your honour."

CHANAKYA : Vrishala wishes to see me. Vaihinari, this prohibition of the moonlight festival ordered by me has surely not reached the ears of Vrishala !

CHAMBERLAIN : Indeed it has your honour.

CHANAKYA : (*Testily*) Ah ! who has reported ?

CHAMBERLAIN : (*Alarmed*) May it please your honour, his majesty when he went to the Suganga palace saw for himself that the city lacked preparations for the moonlight fête.

CHANAKYA : Ah ! I know. Thereupon you people, in between, instigated and angered Vrishala. What else ?

(*The Chamberlain, scared, stands with head cast down, inarticulate*)

CHANAKYA : O ! how biassed is the king's entourage by envy against Chanakya ! Anyway, where is Vrishala ?

CHAMBERLAIN : (*Quailing*) Sir, his majesty when he had gone to Suganga sent me to the feet of your honour.

CHANAKYA : (*Rising*) Show the way to Suganga.

CHAMBERLAIN : This way, your honour. (*Both walk about*)

### SCENE III

#### The Royal Palace.

CHAMBERLAIN : Here is the Suganga palace.

CHANAKYA : (*Representing a climb and looking*)  
Aha ! Vrishala is seated on the lion-throne.  
Good.

Forsaken by the Nanda, who had scorned  
Kubera,  
And by Vrishala filled, the bull among kings,  
The lion-throne<sup>14</sup> is, by a king worthy of  
it, befriended ;  
These events enhance, on merits,  
My sense of supreme felicity. [18]

(*Approaching*) May Vrishala be triumphant.

KING : (*Rising from the throne*) Honoured Sir,  
Chandragupta bows. (*Falls at his feet*)

CHANAKYA : (*Taking both hands*) Arise, my son !

From the snow-mountain, cooled by showers  
and sprays  
Of the celestial river tumbling among its  
canyons,  
From the foreshore of the southern main,  
Scintillating with the myriad hues of its  
sparkling<sup>15</sup> gems,  
May a hundred rajahs anon arrive,  
Nervously to bend in obeisance,  
And illumine the space,  
With the beams of their crest-jewels,  
Betwixt the toes of both your feet. [19]

KING : By your honour's favour I already enjoy  
everything. Please be seated, Sir.

(*Both sit down appropriately*)

CHANAKYA : Vrishala, for what purpose have I been sent for ?

KING : By the sight of your honour to gratify myself.

CHANAKYA : (*Smiling*) Enough of this civility. Not without reason are persons entrusted with official duties summoned by their masters.

KING : Sir, what result does your honour envisage by forbidding the moonlight carnival ?

CHANAKYA : (*With a smirk*) So, we have been summoned to be reprimanded !

KING : May sin be extinct ! Oh ! No ! To ask with deference.

CHANAKYA : If that is so, then certainly it behoves the pupil not to hinder the capricious tastes of those who deserve to be treated with deference.

KING : That is so. No doubt. Nevertheless your honour is never urged to action without a reason ; thus there is room for our<sup>16</sup> question.

CHANAKYA : Vrishala, you are well aware that Chanakya does not act, even in a dream, without reason.

KING : Sir, that is precisely why the desire to serve makes me vocal.

CHANAKYA : Vrishala, listen. In this connection authors on political science have, in fact, described three types of successful government—that which depends exclusively on the king, that which is exclusively dependent on the ministers and the one which is dependent on both together. Consequently, when government is within the exclusive sphere of the ministers why concern yourself with the search

for the grounds of action ? For we, who are empowered in this behalf, are alone concerned with it. (*The king, irate, turns his face away*)

(*Behind the stage two Bards<sup>17</sup> chant*)

FIRST BARD :

The sky is whitened by the radiance of its  
Kasa flowers,  
As by the pallor of his ashes ;  
The cool-rayed moon, to give relief,  
Dispels, through the meshes of the silver  
beams,  
The water-bearing cloudlets  
Dusty like his elephant hide ;  
The dazzling moonlight is its garland,  
Worn like his festoon of skulls ;  
Its skein of swans in flight,  
Gleam like the splendour  
Of his uncommon laughter ;  
May Autumn, clad in the semblance  
Of the body of the Supreme Ruler,  
Likewise, remove your afflictions. [20]

And,

The eyes of Vishnu, just at the moment of  
wakefulness,  
Unable, instantly, to bear the lustre of the  
jewel-lamps,  
Function slowly, due to the slight tear-  
drops  
Engendered by the yawns and the stretch-  
ing of the limbs,  
When he is about to leave the broad couch  
Of the body of the Serpent, with the circle  
of its hoods  
For a cushion ;  
May those oblique eyes, pink at the break  
of his sleep,  
Be, for a long time, your protection.<sup>18</sup> [21]



## SECOND BARD :

For some inscrutable reason are a few men,  
 By the creator, endowed with a store  
 Of vital energy and inherent power ;  
 By their luminous vigour they triumph  
 O'er them that own a mass of elephants  
 Which exude ichor arrogantly.  
 Their dignity, manifest in abundance,  
 Is like that of the king of the beasts  
 Who suffers no interference with his fangs ;  
 So, too, O best of men ! sovereigns para-  
     mount,  
 Like you, brook not the contravention of  
     their commands. [22]

What makes a monarch the master is not  
 The enjoyment of mere decorations and the  
     like ;  
 He whose command none other can defy,  
 Is, like you, acclaimed the master. [23]

CHANAKYA : (*To himself*) To begin with there was a  
 benedictory verse, in the form of a eulogy of  
 the favourite divinities, to depict the charm  
 of autumn which has commenced. What this  
 next one is about I failed to grasp ! (*Reflecting*)  
 Ah ! I know. This is Rakshasa's machination.  
 Evil-minded Rakshasa ! you will see that  
 Kautilya is indeed wakeful.

KING : Good Vaihinari, see that these two bards are  
 given a thousand gold coins.

CHAMBERLAIN : If your majesty orders. (*Moves  
     away*)

CHANAKYA : (*Testily*) Vaihinari ! Wait, do not go !  
 Vrishala, why this pouring out of large sums  
 of money to the undeserving ?

KING : (*Flaring up*) When the extent of my activity is thus restricted on all sides by your honour sovereignty is like a prison to me ; it has no semblance with royal authority.

CHANAKYA : Vrishala, in the case of kings who do not personally apply themselves to state affairs such drawbacks tend to arise. If, therefore, you find it intolerable then take over charge personally.

KING : Here we are assuming charge of the duties of our own office.

CHANAKYA : I am agreeable. I, too, shall occupy myself with my own activities.

KING : That being so, I should now like to hear the reason for the prohibition of the moonlight celebration.

CHANAKYA : Vrishala, I, too, wish to hear the reason for the observance of the moonlight festival.

KING : To begin with it is the contravention of my order.

CHANAKYA : Vrishala, with me, also, the contravention of your order is itself the primary reason for the prohibition of the moonlight celebration.

For,

Upto the sandy beach—shaded by forests  
Dark with the leaves of the Palmyra—  
Of the four oceans,<sup>19</sup> whose deep waters  
Swirl agitated by shoals of whales in motion,  
Your command, like a chaplet of unwithered  
flowers,

Is borne on the head by a hundred rajahs ;  
 That it should solely falter in my case  
 Shall proclaim your paramountcy  
 Is adorned with humility. [24]

If now you wish to hear the other reason, that,  
 too, I shall mention.

KING : You may please mention it.

CHANAKYA : Sonottara, say to the Kayastha Achala  
 from me to please hand over the written message  
 of Bhadrabhata and the rest who being dis-  
 affected have fled and sought refuge with  
 Malayaketu.

MAID : If your honour orders. (*Goes out and  
 enters*) Sir, here is the missive.

CHANAKYA : (*Receiving*) Vrishala, please see this.

KING : (*Reads, to himself*)—

Hail!<sup>20</sup> to his majesty Chandragupta, blessed  
 be his name; from the principal officers, his  
 adherents, who having withdrawn from him  
 have joined Malayaketu, deserving of death,  
 this is an authoritative document in writing.  
 The superintendent of elephants, Bhadrabhata,  
 the superintendent of the cavalry, Purushadatta,  
 Dingarata, the sister's son of Chandrabhanu,  
 the principal janitor, the Maharaja Baladeva-  
 gupta a relation of your majesty's own clan,  
 Rajasena, retainer since the very boyhood of  
 your majesty, Bhagurayana, younger brother  
 of the army commander Simhabala, Lohitak-  
 sha, the prince royal of Malava, and the spokes-  
 man of the Kshatriya republics—all of us are  
 vigilantly attentive to your majesty's plan of  
 action.

(*Aloud*) So much for this letter, Sir. I should  
 now like to hear the reasons for their discontent.

**CHANAKYA :** Vrishala, please listen. As regards those two superintendents<sup>21</sup> in charge of the elephants and the cavalry, respectively named Bhadrabhata and Purushadatta, they with their habits of dissipation with women, wine and the chase, were neglectful of the work of supervision of the elephants and the cavalry. They were degraded from their posts and put on a mere subsistence allowance. So they went over to the cause of the enemy and are serving under Malayaketu in their respective jobs. The two Dingarata and Balagupta, overcome by excessive greed, considered the salary granted by you to be insufficient, and expecting more there have deserted and resorted to Malayaketu. Then this Rajasena, your servant from boyhood, he, too, having obtained a very large treasure, elephants and horses, through your grace, and having suddenly become very rich is apprehensive that he might lose this and so has deserted and joined Malayaketu. Then again this Bhagurayana, brother of the army commander Simhabala, he, too, during that period had grown intimate with Parvataka ; because of this affection, by revealing to Malayaketu in confidence that his father had been put to death by Chanakya, he has scared Malayaketu and driven him away. Thereafter when Chandana-dasa and others, engaged in activities prejudicial to you, were arrested he, becoming alarmed on account of his own guilt, has joined Malayaketu. The latter, on his part, believing him to be his life's saviour and yielding to the impulse of gratitude has given him the post of minister to be near his own person.

**KING :** Thus when the cause of the disloyalty of these persons was known, why were countermeasures not immediately taken by your honour ?

CHANAKYA: Vrishala, it was not expedient to counteract.

KING: Was it because of lack of efficiency or through consideration of policy?

CHANAKYA: How could it possibly be through inefficiency? It was solely for consideration of policy.

KING: Then I should like to hear the reasons of policy.

CHANAKYA: Please listen and bear them in mind. In the matter of disaffected persons there is a twofold countermeasure—favour and repression. As for favour, in the case of Bhadrabhata and Purushadatta, who had been removed from office, it could only mean re-instatement to their posts. Restoration to place of power of men of that sort, who neglect duty owing to vice, would ruin the force of elephants and cavalry which is the very basis of the entire authority of government. In the case of the overgreedy Dingarata and Balagupta, who would remain insatiable even after the gift of the entire kingdom, what possibility was there of appeasement? In the case of Rajasena and Bhagurayana who were apprehensive of the loss of their wealth, where was the room for approbation? In Lohitaksa and Vijaya-varman, too, puffed up with overweening pride, unable to bear their kinsman, by what manner of favour could affection be engendered? Thus the former alternative is disposed of. As for the latter, if we, to whom the sovereign authority of the Nanda accrued not long ago, were to harass the class of eminent persons who have risen to power with us, we should only become objects of distrust to the subjects loyal to the

Nanda dynasty; hence it was ruled out altogether. Thus Malayaketu, to avenge the murder of his father, is conferring favours on our partisans and is favourably inclined towards the counsels of Rakshasa, and surrounded by a mighty force of the Mlechhas is preparing to attack us. This is, thus, a time for military exercises<sup>22</sup> and is not a festive occasion. In place of organizing improvements of the fortifications, why should the moonlight festival be celebrated? Hence it has been forbidden.

KING: Sir, there is much to ask in this connection.

CHANAKYA: Vrishala, ask unhesitatingly. I, too, have much to say about this.

KING: Why was this Malayaketu, root of all the trouble, overlooked when he was about to escape?

CHANAKYA: There were alternative courses of action in not overlooking; either to arrest or to make over a moiety of the empire as promised. In the case of arrest it would have meant the putting of our sign manual on an act of ingratitude to confirm that we ourselves had destroyed Parvataka. If the moiety of the empire were to be made over, the death of Parvataka would have been the only fruit of ingratitude. Consequently, Malayaketu was, when about to flee, ignored.

KING: So that's that. Rakshasa, on the other hand, who was present here, has been ignored by your honour. What, Sir, is your answer to this?

CHANAKYA: As for Rakshasa, owing to his firm devotion to his liege-lord, and the fact that he had long associated with them, the subjects

loyal to the Nandas, who appreciate high character, have the utmost confidence in him. He is in touch with men of intellect and personal valour; possessing wealthy collaborators and equipped with funds he, if present within the empire, could indeed give rise to a mighty internal upheaval; if made to go outside, though he might cause external aggression<sup>28</sup> he could be brought under control somehow by diplomatic means. Thus residing in the state he was altogether like a dart lying near the heart, and like it was extracted and put at a distance.

KING: Sir, why was he not by main force taken prisoner?

CHANAKYA: He is veritably a giant! If he were to be taken prisoner by heroics he might have destroyed many from among your forces or himself perished. If this had happened it would have been in either case detrimental.

Look,

If assailed with vigour his end he had met,  
Indeed, O Vrishala! the loss would be ours  
Losing a man of his calibre;  
Should he the chiefs of your forces have  
slain,

That, too, might have been distressing;  
Wherefore has he by strategy to be guided,  
To welcome captivity, as is the elephant  
From the wilds, by suitable means. [25]

KING: We are not able to excel your honour's prescience. Altogether in this matter the minister Rakshasa alone is the more praiseworthy.

CHANAKYA: (*Nettled*) "And not you" such is the rest of the sentence. O Vrishala! What has he achieved?

KING: Listen please. In sooth, that high-minded man,

Though the city was taken he lingered,  
 at will,  
 Placing his heel on our neck ;  
 He, by main force, the announcements  
 impeded  
 Of victory and the like by our forces ;  
 By the wealth of his devices of policy,  
 Confusion, widespread is engendered to the  
 utmost,  
 Until our minds have ceased to confide  
 Even in those who are trustworthy  
 Among our own milieu. [26]

CHANAKYA: (*Airily*) Is that all that Rakshasa has achieved? O Vrishala! I, on the contrary, thought that having uprooted you like the Nanda, Malayaketu was, as you had been, installed in the place of power as the paramount king of kings!<sup>24</sup>

KING: That was done solely by someone else; how is your honour concerned with it?

CHANAKYA: O reviler!

Releasing before the public gaze—  
 Whilst tremulous finger-tips throbbed  
 With rising anger—the locks of hair,  
 The grim vow was undertaken,  
 For the long duration until  
 The annihilation of the enemy's family ;  
 By who else have been expunged,  
 Those lords of ninety-nine hundred crores  
 of treasure,<sup>25</sup>  
 The Nandas, slaughtered in succession  
 Like sacrificial beasts within sight of Rak-  
 shasa ! [27]



Moreover,

The vultures in the sky, circling  
 With their long wings motionless  
 In flight, have the semblance of smoke  
 Which went curling up the firmament,  
 Veiling the light of day, like the clouds,  
 From the pyres of the Nandas ;  
 And, behold ! these beasts,  
 Denizens of the funeral ground,  
 Jubilantly watching the flames  
 Which, fed by the ample marrow,  
 Are not yet extinct. [28]

KING : That solely, was achieved by someone else.

CHANAKYA : Ah ! by whom ?

KING : By Providence hostile to the House of  
 Nanda.

CHANAKYA : The ignorant rely on Providence.

KING : And the learned refrain from bragging.

CHANAKYA : (*Menacingly*) Vrishala, you would  
 trample on me as on a servant !

My hand is rushing to release the hair  
 though loose,

(*Striking the floor with the foot*)

While this foot hurries to embark afresh  
 on a vow,

Beware ! how, tempted by doom, you would  
 now ignite—

What, since the fall of the Nandas, has  
 been extinct—

The glowing flame of my anger ! [29]

KING: (*Distraught; to himself*) Oh! Could it be that his honour's anger is genuine!

For,

By the gleam of his fiery eyes narrowed  
By the limpid tears dropping from the  
eye-lashes

Tremulous with rage,  
And the knitting of the brows,  
Resembling the curling smoke,  
Of his anger ablaze as of yore,  
Methinks the earth—recalling the sublime  
sentiment

Displayed by Siva in performances of the  
Tandava<sup>26</sup>

Engendering terrific tremors—has borne,  
With difficulty, the impact of his foot. [30]

CHANAKYA: (*Recovering from his pretended anger*)  
Vrishala, enough of this exchange of retaliatory  
answers. If Rakshasa is considered superior  
to me, then this sword of office might be given  
to him. (*Gives up the weapon, rising; to himself,*  
*fixing the gaze in vacancy*) Rakshasa, so much  
for the climax of your intellect in an attempt  
to triumph over the genius of Kautilya!

Estranged from devotion to Chanakya,  
It were easy to vanquish the Maurya,  
To this end thou art toiling;  
This cleavage, all of which supposedly  
Is due to thee, is with consequences fraught,  
O miscreant! to thy own detriment. [31]

(*Goes out*)

KING: Gentle Vaihinari, henceforth disregarding  
Chanakya, Chandragupta will himself conduct  
the affairs of state; so, please act so that the  
principal officers grasp this policy.

CHAMBERLAIN: (*To himself*) How now! merely Chanakya without the honorific prefix, and not the honourable Chanakya! Heigho! the powers have been resumed; or, perhaps, in this affair his majesty is not to blame.

For,

It is the minister who, alone is at fault,  
If a king should do wrong; <sup>27</sup>  
Through the negligence of his controller,  
The elephant is traduced  
As a vicious <sup>28</sup> beast. [32]

KING: Sir, what may you be ruminating?

CHAMBERLAIN: Nothing at all, Sire, Congratulations that your majesty has now become the King regnant!

KING: (*To himself*) While our action is interpreted in this wise may the Arya, anxious to achieve success in his own plans, have the fulfilment of his wishes.

(*Aloud*) Sonottara, owing to this dry altercation I am suffering from headache. Indicate the way to the bed-chamber.

MAID: May it please your majesty to proceed.

KING: (*To himself*)

Though, at his honour's own behest,  
I did venture beyond the bounds of  
decorum,  
I feel urged to sink veritably into a chasm  
in the earth;  
Those who, in truth, their elders humiliate,  
How, indeed, does their heart remain  
Unpierced by shame! [33]

(*All go out*)

END OF THE THIRD ACT

## FOURTH ACT

### SCENE I

Street before Rakshasa's House.

*(Enters a man in the guise of a way-farer)*

MAN: Dear me!

The king's order must prevail,  
Who, on earth, would else go to and fro,  
Were it not for the injunction onerous  
Of the lord to travel without halting. [1]

So, I go to the house of the minister Rakshasa.  
*(Moving about as if tired)* Is any door-keeper  
here! Announce to the master, the minister  
Rakshasa: "Karabhaka, hurrying from Patali-  
putra has just arrived."

DOOR-KEEPER: Good man, speak softly. The  
minister, suffering from headache, engendered  
by sleeplessness due to the worries of office,  
has not yet left the bed-chamber. Therefore,  
wait awhile. When I get an opportunity I  
shall announce your arrival.

MAN: Gentleface, do so.

*(Then is discovered, on a seat in the bed-chamber,  
in the company of Shakata-dasa, Rakshasa, looking  
worried)*

RAKSHASA: *(To himself)*

Musing anxiously, at the inception of this  
adventure,  
On the non-compliant ways of Providence,  
On Kautilya's crooked genius,  
As well as on the expedients manifold  
Devised for discomfiture of his plans,  
I remain sleepless; and the night invariably  
passes  
While I wonder how all this will succeed! [2]

Also,

Sowing, at the outset, a tiny seed of the  
plot,  
He plans for it a further extension,  
When the seed germinates, its eventual  
fruition,  
Hidden and mysterious, is gradually re-  
vealed ;  
Skilfully he promotes a discussion,  
Yet controls the affairs despite their com-  
plexity ;  
It is either an author of plays,<sup>1</sup>  
Who suffers from agonizing strain,  
Or one in my position. [3]

Would that the imp Chanakya—

(*Approaching*)

DOOR-KEEPER : Be victorious—

RAKSHASA : It were possible to overreach—

DOOR-KEEPER : Minister !

RAKSHASA : (*Indicating a flicker of the left eye-lid ; to himself*) May the evil-minded Chanakya be victorious, it might be possible to overreach the minister ; thus the oracle, prefaced by the flicker of the eye-lid has vouched. Nevertheless, efforts must continue unceasingly.<sup>2</sup> (*Aloud*) Goodman, what dost thou desire to say ?

DOOR-KEEPER : Minister, Karabhaka is waiting at the door.

RAKSHASA : Admit forthwith.

DOOR-KEEPER : If you please. (*Goes out and approaching the man*) Goodman, come to the minister.

KARABHAKA: (*Approaching*) May the minister be victorious.

RAKSHASA: Goodman, sit down.

KARABHAKA: If the minister directs. (*Sits on the floor*)

RAKSHASA: (*To himself*) For what purpose was this man despatched, I am, owing to the multiplicity of purposes, unable to recall. (*Shows he is distracted*)

(*Then enters an Officer with a staff-bearer*)

OFFICER: Move on, move on! He has arrived. Make way, make way, you people! Can you not see!

To be near them is a far cry, even to get a sight  
Of the human divinities is difficult,  
For those not blest by fortune;  
They are, like the gods,  
Upholders of social well-being and justice.  
[4]

(*In vacancy*) Good folks, what say you?—  
“Wherefore is the road being cleared?” Gentle-  
men, the Prince Malayaketu is coming this way  
to visit the minister Rakshasa, who is suffering  
from headache. So, the way is being cleared.

(*The Officer goes out*)

(*Then enters Malayaketu escorted by Bhagurayana and the Chamberlain*)

MALAYAKETU: (*Sighing; to himself*) Today is the tenth month since father passed away and we, who in vain pride ourselves on our manliness, have not discharged the obligation due to him

of even the water libation.<sup>3</sup> This is what, formerly, I had vowed.

The pearl necklaces snapped  
 With the beating of the breasts,  
 And the upper garment slipped,  
 Whilst with cries of woe  
 She piteously wailed,  
 Her tresses soiled with the floor-dust,  
 Such was mother's plight, grief-engendered ;  
 To this condition the enemies' wives  
 Shall presently be transmuted,  
 And thus to the parent shall be offered,  
 By my cupped hand, the water libation.

[5]

In brief,

Shouldering the yoke worthy of the adventurous,  
 It is meet that I, seeking death in battle,  
 Should go the way of my forefather ;  
 Or, snatching the tears from mother's eyes  
 Should carry them to the eyes  
 Of the wives of my foe.

[6]

(*Aloud*) Good Jajali, say from me to the rajahs who are escorting "Alone I wish to give the minister Rakshasa the pleasure of an unexpected visit. So they may refrain from the trouble of following."

CHAMBERLAIN: If you please. (*Moves about ; in vacancy*) O Rajahs ! the Prince commands that all are excused from escorting him. (*Looking with delight*) Immediately after the Prince's order all the rajahs have turned back. May the Prince be pleased to observe—

Rearing high, flecked with foam, and the  
 necks arched excessively  
 By the tightening of the curb of their  
 bridles,

The chargers, by some restrained,  
 Are as it were threshing the sky  
 With their hooves ;  
 While the leading elephants  
 Of others in the escort,  
 Checked in their paces, are standing still  
 With silent bells ;  
 Like tidal limits by the sea,  
 The bounds of deference are not trans-  
 gressed,  
 By the rajahs. [7]

MALAYAKETU : Sir, you also may retire together  
 with the retainers. Let Bhagurayana alone  
 follow me.

CHAMBERLAIN : If you please. (*Goes out with the  
 retainers*)

MALAYAKETU : Friend Bhagurayana, I was thus  
 respectfully informed by Bhadrabhata and  
 others, who have come over—"We have not  
 sought shelter with the Prince through the  
 medium<sup>4</sup> of the minister Rakshasa. Rather  
 we have put our faith in the Prince's minister  
 of war Shikharasena. Being disaffected with  
 Chandragupta, who is hedged round by a wicked  
 counsellor, we seek shelter with the Prince  
 who, endowed with charming qualities, is worthy  
 to be served." Long though I have thought I  
 have failed to grasp the significance of this  
 avowal on their part.

BHAGURAYANA : Prince, the matter is not difficult  
 to perceive. That one should approach, for  
 service, a prince, with the ambition to conquer,  
 endowed with royal qualities and who is cap-  
 able of granting asylum, through the medium  
 of his intimate friend is the purpose which is  
 perfectly reasonable.



MALAYAKETU : Friend Bhagurayana, surely the minister Rakshasa is our dearest friend and benefactor !

BHAGURAYANA : That is so. The hatred of the minister Rakshasa, however, is fastened on Chanakya, not Chandragupta. So, if ever the latter should find Chanakya insufferable, on account of his assuming the airs of a victor, and should depose him from the office of minister, in that event the minister Rakshasa, through devotion to the House of Nanda, might arrive at a rapprochement with Chandragupta considering him as a cadet of the Nandas and out of regard for his circle of friends ; should this happen the Prince would not have confidence in us—such is the meaning of their statement.

MALAYAKETU : That is plausible. Indicate the way to the minister's house.

BHAGURAYANA : This way, Prince.

*(Both stroll about)*

BHAGURAYANA : This is the minister's house. May it please the Prince to enter. *(Both of them enter)*

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## SCENE II

Apartment in Rakshasa's House.

RAKSHASA: (*To himself*) Ah! I remember.  
(*Aloud*) Goodman, did you see Stanakalasha in  
Kusuma-pura?

MAN: I did, minister.

MALAYAKETU: (*Listening*) Bhagurayana, the news  
of Kusuma-pura is being narrated. Let us not  
approach just yet, let us hearken awhile.

Since,

For fear of interference with their counsel  
The ministers speak in one way  
In the king's presence;  
They speak differently in their free discus-  
sions  
When matters are laid bare. [8]

BHAGURAYANA: If it is the Prince's order.

RAKSHASA: Goodman, was that mission success-  
ful?

MAN: By grace of the minister it was successful.

MALAYAKETU: Friend Bhagurayana, what could  
that mission have been?

BHAGURAYANA: Prince, the news for the minister  
is mysterious. To probe it with so little is not  
possible. The Prince may be pleased, mean-  
while, to listen intently.

RAKSHASA: Goodman, I wish to hear in detail.

MAN: The minister may please listen. I was thus  
ordered by the minister: "Karabhaka, go to

Kusuma-pura and say to the minstrel Stanakalasha from me that whenever the good as dead Chanakya should commit breaches of orders he should eulogize Chandragupta through verses capable of engendering resentment."

RAKSHASA : Well then ?

KARABHAKA : Thereupon having journeyed to Pataliputra I conveyed the minister's message to the minstrel Stanakalasha. At this time the king, in order to placate the citizens aggrieved by the destruction of the Nandas, had announced the celebration of the moonlight festival. Recurring after a long time the festival, which promotes social contacts, was hailed with rapture by the citizens like reunion with the beloved wife.

RAKSHASA : (*Plaintively*) Alas ! King Nanda !

What manner of moonlight carnival  
 Could there be, bereft of you,  
 The source of gladness universal  
 O moon among monarchs !  
 Even though the moon,  
 To gladden the lotuses  
 Did shed light ! [9]

KARABHAKA : Then much against the king's wishes the festival, the delight of the people's eyes, was forbidden by the good as dead Chanakya. At this juncture Stanakalasha put forth a series of verses calculated to incite Chandragupta.

RAKSHASA : What sort ?

(*Recites the verse " For some inscrutable reason "*  
*etc., already chanted*)

RAKSHASA: (*Jubilant*) Bravo! Stanakalasha, bravo!  
In time has been sown the seed of dissension  
which inevitably will exhibit the fruit.

Since,

In a trice, even a commoner  
Brooks no interference with  
The lively enjoyment of his amusements ;  
How then could he, who is the lord of the  
land,  
Bearing a lustre which transcends,  
That of all men ? [10]

MALAYAKETU: That is so.

RAKSHASA: Then what happened ?

KARABHAKA: Thereafter Chandragupta, offended by  
the contravention of his order, eulogizing the  
merits of the minister as the occasion warranted,  
degraded the accursed Chanakya from the office  
of authority.

MALAYAKETU: Friend Bhagurayana, by praising  
his virtues Chandragupta revealed his predilec-  
tion and partiality for Rakshasa.

BHAGURAYANA: Not so much by praising the  
virtues as by the ejection of the imp Chanakya.

RAKSHASA: Was it merely the prohibition of the  
moonlight celebration which was the cause of  
Chandragupta's exasperation with Chanakya  
or was there also anything else ?

MALAYAKETU: Friend, by exploring other reasons  
for Chandragupta's displeasure, what eventual  
benefit does he visualize ?

BHAGURAYANA: Prince, Chanakya is discreet and  
would not, merely for a trivial reason, irritate

Chandragupta ; nor would Chandragupta, grateful for services rendered, transgress the bounds of decorum for so little. Altogether, a discord, between Chanakya and Chandragupta, which might arise through multifarious causes is the one that is likely to endure.

**KARABHAKA :** There are, of course, other reasons for Chandragupta's displeasure—that Chanakya has connived at the escape of Malayaketu and of the minister Rakshasa.

**RAKSHASA :** (*Beaming*) Shakata-dasa, Chandragupta will come into the palm of my hand ! Presently, there will be release of Chandana-dasa from detention, and you will be reunited with your son and wife.

**MALAYAKETU :** Friend Bhagurayana, what does he mean by the expression “ come into the palm of the hand ? ”

**BHAGURAYANA :** What else ? By the dethronement of Chandragupta, when detached from Chanakya, he sees that there is necessarily nothing of importance to be gained.

**RAKSHASA :** Goodman, deprived of authority where now is that wily fellow ?

**KARABHAKA :** He is still resident in Pataliputra.

**RAKSHASA :** (*Perplexed*) Goodman, he still continues to reside there ; he has not gone to the penance-forest, nor has he entered upon a heroic vow !

**KARABHAKA :** One hears that he proposes to go to the penance-forest.

RAKSHASA : Shakata-dasa, this is baffling.

Look,

From his majesty, the Indra on the earth's  
surface,  
He brooked not the insult of removal  
From his seat of honour ;  
How should he, high mettled, bear  
This injury from the Maurya,  
Whom he himself has crowned king ! [11]

MALAYAKETU : Friend, through Chanakya's departure for the wilds, or embarking upon a fresh vow, what personal gain could be secured by him ?

BHAGURAYANA : The matter is not very unintelligible. The greater the distance of Chanakya from Chandragupta, the better for this one to achieve his own ends.

SHAKATA-DASA : There is no need to imagine otherwise. This is quite comprehensible. The minister may please observe,

The Maurya has his foot planted on the  
crests of rajahs,  
Whose locks of hair are lit by jewels  
On their tiaras gleaming like moon-beams ;  
How should he, by his own men committed,  
Suffer a breach of his orders !  
And, though wrathful, Kautilya personally  
has known  
The agony of a vow of malevolence ;  
The vow, by chance fulfilled, he no more  
could renew,  
Scared by future discomfiture. [12]

RAKSHASA : Shakata-dasa, that is so. Go make Karabhaka comfortable.

SHAKATA-DASA : If you please. (*Goes out with Karabhaka*)

RAKSHASA : And I should like to interview the Prince.

(*Advancing*)

MALAYAKETU : I have myself come to see your honour.

RAKSHASA : (*Seeing*) Oh ! The Prince ! (*Rising from his seat*) This is the seat. The Prince will, graciously, be seated.

MALAYAKETU : I shall sit presently. Please be seated, sir. (*Sits as is appropriate to his rank*) Sir, is the headache bearable ?

RAKSHASA : While the appellation of prince has not been discarded in favour of the title of paramount sovereign by the Prince whence could there be relief for my headache ?

MALAYAKETU : This, undertaken by your honour, shall not be difficult to achieve. But, how long should we remain impassive like this, though our forces are mustered, awaiting some misfortune of the enemy ?

RAKSHASA : Why, there is now no room for biding the time.

MALAYAKETU : Sir, have you then received news of any misfortune<sup>5</sup> of the enemy ?

RAKSHASA : Precisely.

MALAYAKETU : What sort is it ?

RAKSHASA : The defection of his counsellor ; what else is needed ? Chandragupta has been estranged from Chanakya !

MALAYAKETU : Sir, this merely is the loss of a counsellor.

**RAKSHASA :** In the case of other kings perhaps the loss of the minister may not be a peril. Not so, however, with Chandragupta.

**MALAYAKETU :** Sir, might it not be like this—that the sole reason for the discontent of the officers of Chandragupta was the faults of Chanakya who having been discarded they, attached from the outset to Chandragupta, would now demonstrate even more staunchly their loyalty to him ?

**RAKSHASA :** Nay, not so. These officers are, in fact, of two sorts ; those who rose to power in association with Chandragupta and those who were loyal to the Nandas. In this matter, the errors of Chanakya are the cause of discontent only for the associates of Chandragupta, not for the adherents of the House of Nanda. The latter, hostile on account of the destruction by him of the Nanda dynasty which had fathered them, might nurse their grievance yet so long as a mansion of security of their own is unavailable, would be obliged to endure Chandragupta. When, however, they find a belligerent like you, powered by ambition, capable of eradicating the adversary, they soon would desert and resort to you only. And of this we ourselves are an example.

**MALAYAKETU :** Sir, this trouble with the minister—is it the sole ground for starting the offensive against Chandragupta, or is there also any other ?

**RAKSHASA :** Why need one have several others ? Actually, this is the main one.

**MALAYAKETU :** Sir, how is it the main one ? Is it the case that at this juncture, Chandragupta is not, by placing the burden of state affairs



elsewhere on the shoulders of another minister and himself, or by bearing it in person, capable of constructive measures to counter it ?

**RAKSHASA :** He is definitely incapable. In the case of kings whose government is either an autocracy or depends on collaboration with the ministers there may be a possibility of a constitutional reorganisation. The evil-minded Chandragupta, however, has always had a government exclusively dependent on the ministers and, like one with deficient eyesight, has failed to observe world affairs ; how should he be competent by himself to adopt measures to reorganize the constitution !

Planting her feet on the shoulders,  
Of the minister and of the king,  
When they are of equal eminence,  
Royal sovereignty balances herself  
Like a danseuse on high stilts ;<sup>6</sup>  
Should the height of the supports  
Be unequal, she is compelled to give up,  
Either of the two, through nervousness  
Spontaneous in the feminine nature. [13]

A king, detached from the minister,  
To whom he has delivered himself,  
Is, in state affairs, unobservant,  
While his wits are slow to grasp  
Like those of a babe ;  
To remain apart, even for a space,  
He cannot bear,  
Like an infant<sup>7</sup>  
From the breast withdrawn. [14]

**MALAYAKETU :** (*To himself*) Fortunately, my administration is not within the exclusive sphere of the ministers. (*Aloud*) Even if it were so, still when there are several grounds for the

offensive to be launched the aggressor, initiating the attack on account of the enemy's weak points, feels he is absolutely sure of success in his objective.

RAKSHASA : The Prince may rest assured that the objective shall be attained with absolute certainty.

Since,

With veteran forces you, ruler of men,  
Are to direct the offensive,  
And the city remains loyal to the Nandas,  
And the Maurya is but a new king ;  
While, I, at your disposal remain- (*When  
half-uttered checks himself and shows his  
modesty*)

—to strive and to join in the operations  
To the extent merely of indicating the way ;  
For the attainment, O lord ! of our aims,  
There remains naught but your command.

[15]

MALAYAKETU : If your honour thus views it as an opportune moment for attack then why tarry ?

The Shona<sup>s</sup> river—with her high banks,  
Her flowing stream darkened by the trees  
At her sides ; and the murmur of her waters,  
Whose swift current causes the subsidence  
of her banks—shall be matched  
By the black mass of my war elephants,  
Of great height, exuding ichor and fiercely  
Trumpeting, as they dig up the river banks  
Swiftly with their tusks. Let them approach—

In their hundreds, painted sanguinary red—  
The Shona to quench their thirst  
In the waters of the river.

[16]

Furthermore,

Let my troop of war-elephants—  
 With the deep thunder of their trumpeting,  
 Threatening like a cloud-burst, and throwing  
     out sprays  
 Mingled with their own liquid ichor—  
 Envelope the city,  
 Like a girdle of clouds  
 Gathered to discharge torrential waters  
 On Mount Vindhya. [17]

*(So goes out Malayaketu with Bhagurayana)*

RAKSHASA : Is any one here !<sup>9</sup>

*(Enters)*

MAN : Minister, your orders.

RAKSHASA : Priyamvadaka, which among the astrologers is present at the gateway ?

MAN : The Kshapanaka<sup>10</sup>—

RAKSHASA : *(To himself ; indicating an evil omen)*  
 How now ! At the very outset a Kshapanaka !

MAN : Jivasiddhi.

RAKSHASA : *(Aloud)* He is not loathsome to look at. Admit him.

MAN : If you please. *(Goes out)*

*(Enters)*

MONK :

Follow the commandments of the Arhats,<sup>11</sup>  
 The physicians for the malady of delusion,  
 Whose prescription, for the nonce, is bitter  
 Yet, in the sequel, conduces to good health. [18]

*(Approaching)*

May the Shravakas<sup>12</sup> attain the way of righteousness.

RAKSHASA : Bhadanta,<sup>13</sup> please find the day for our march.

MONK : (*Meditatively*) Shravaka, I find when the orb of the moon is complete the full-moon day, in all respects, is auspicious from noon onwards.

Moreover,

When the Sun is about to set,  
The Moon with the full disc is risen,  
The time of the march is  
During the conjunction of Mercury ;  
And there is, no sooner he has risen,  
The setting of Ketu. [19]

RAKSHASA : But the day itself is objectionable.<sup>14</sup>

MONK : Shravaka,

The lunar day has a unit of merit,  
The lunar mansion has merit fourfold,  
The merit, however, of the conjunction  
Is sixty-fourfold ;  
Thus testifies with authority  
The science of the stars. [20]

Thus,

A conjunction becomes an auspicious conjunction,  
When the planet Mercury presides over it ;  
Supported by the power of the Moon,  
You should go a long way  
On the path of successful achievement. [21]

RAKSHASA : Bhadanta, please confer with other astrologers.

MONK : The Shravaka may, if he chooses, consult ;  
I shall, however, depart.<sup>15</sup>

RAKSHASA : Bhadanta is surely not angry !

Furthermore,

Let my troop of war-clephants—  
 With the deep thunder of their trumpeting,  
 Threatening like a cloud-burst, and throwing  
     out sprays  
 Mingled with their own liquid ichor—  
 Envelope the city,  
 Like a girdle of clouds  
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RAKSHASA : Bhadanta, please confer with other astrologers.

MONK : The Shravaka may, if he chooses, consult ;  
I shall, however, depart.<sup>15</sup>

RAKSHASA : Bhadanta is surely not angry !

MONK : It is not Bhadanta who is angry with you.

RAKSHASA : Who is, then ?

MONK : The divine Death-dealer ; since by deserting the cause of one's own people, the cause of an alien people is being strengthened. (*Thus goes out the Monk*)

RAKSHASA : Priyamvadaka, find out what time it is.

PRIYAMVADAKA : It is nearing sunset.

RAKSHASA : (*Rising and gazing*) Heigho ! The divine luminary<sup>16</sup> is about to sink. Such is at present the state of affairs—

Demonstrating their loyal affection,  
To the rising sun the moment  
He climbs over the eastern hills,  
The garden-trees hasten to cast  
Long shadows with their foliage ;  
But when the orb of the sun is sinking  
Behind the edge of the western hills,  
They turn away from him.  
So, do servants, ordinarily,  
Desert from service when  
Fortune forsakes the master.<sup>17</sup>

[22]

(*All go out*)

END OF THE FOURTH ACT

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## FIFTH ACT

### SCENE I

The Camp of Malayaketu.

*(Enters Siddharthaka carrying a letter and a sealed packet of ornaments)*

SIDDHARTHAKA : It is a marvel !

The creeper of Chanakya's strategy,  
Sprinkled with the flowing waters of his  
intellect,  
Through appropriate vessels of place and  
time,  
Will display the fruit of this mighty state  
affair. [1]

*(Enters)*

MONK : I bend my head before the Arhats  
Who, through profound nature of their  
perception,  
By paths world-renowned, attain  
Spiritual success in this world. [2]

SIDDHARTHAKA : Bhadanta, I salute.

MONK : Shravaka, may thou attain the way of  
righteousness ! *(Observing)* Shravaka, I notice  
thou art prepared to go on a journey.

SIDDHARTHAKA : How does your reverence know it ?

MONK : Shravaka, what is there to know in this ?  
There is that letter placed on thy ear which is  
a sufficient indication.

SIDDHARTHAKA : Your reverence has found out.  
I am setting out for another region. So your  
reverence may please tell me if this is a lucky  
day.



MONK: Shravaka, after the head has been shaved thou wouldst enquire about the constellations! <sup>2</sup>

SIDDHARTHAKA: Your reverence, even now where is the harm? Say, whether it is favourable for the start of a journey, then I may proceed.

MONK: Shravaka, nowadays in the camp of Malaya-ketu there is nothing like a favourable moment.

SIDDHARTHAKA: Say, how is that your reverence?

MONK: Listen, Shravaka. At first in this camp people were allowed unrestrained egress and ingress. Now that Kusuma-pura is coming closer no one is permitted to go out, or to enter, who is not in possession of a passport. <sup>3</sup> So, provided thou hast a pass with the seal of Bhagurayana thou mayst go with assurance, otherwise halt lest thou be made to enter the royal court bound hand and foot, by the officials of the guard-station. <sup>4</sup>

SIDDHARTHAKA: Is not your reverence aware that as an attendant of the minister Rakshasa even if I were to go out without a sealed authorization who can have the power to prevent me?

MONK: Shravaka, thou mayst belong to Rakshasa, or to a demon, nonetheless there are no means for one, not in possession of a sealed authorization, to get out of here.

SIDDHARTHAKA: Do not be displeased, your reverence; wish me success in my undertaking.

MONK: Shravaka, depart. May success attend thy mission. I, too, shall request Bhagurayana for a sealed permit.

*(Both go out)*

THUS ENDS THE INTERLUDE

## SCENE II

A Pavilion in the Camp.

*(Then enters Bhagurayana followed by an officer)*

BHAGURAYANA: *(To himself)* Oh the amazing multiplicity of the honourable Chanakya's strategy !

At times it is possible to guess the objective,  
Anon, it is abstruse, for the springs of  
action

Are unknown ; sometimes the shape is fully  
developed,

While occasionally it is very slender,  
Through the exigency of state affairs ;  
Unselom the seed is lost, whilst frequently  
It gathers a bumper crop,  
Thus, in a maze, like Destiny,

Are the variegated forms of the diplomacy  
of statesmen. [3]

*(Aloud)* Good Bhasuraka, the Prince wishes that  
I should not be far off. So, place a seat in  
this very pavilion of public audience.

OFFICER: Here is a seat. Your honour may please  
be seated.

BHAGURAYANA: *(Sits)* Goodman, whoever seeking a  
pass desires to see me should be admitted by you.

OFFICER: If it is your honour's order. *(Goes out)*

BHAGURAYANA: *(To himself)* How tragic that the  
Prince who is so cordial to us must be duped  
and how difficult it makes the task !

Turning the face away from good breeding,  
Decency, personal repute, and self-respect,  
And selling the body, transitory though it be,  
Through lure of gain, to the owner of riches,

Is it any use for a dependent person,  
 Whilst complying with orders,  
 To discriminate—when he has passed be-  
 yond reflection—  
 Whether a course of conduct  
 Is, now, right or unright? [4]

*(Then enters Malayaketu followed by the Maid-in-  
 waiting)*

MALAYAKETU : *(To himself)* It is queer ! My mind  
 upset by sundry misgivings is not able to arrive  
 at a definite conclusion regarding Rakshasa,  
 For,

Through loyalty unswerving,  
 Strengthened by devotion to the House of  
 Nanda,  
 Will he with the successful Maurya,  
 Offshoot of Nanda's race, who Chanakya  
 has discarded,  
 Make terms of peace ;  
 Or considering the claim superior  
 Of the stable virtue of allegiance,  
 To his promise remain true ;  
 Thus my mind, as if mounted  
 on the potter's wheel,  
 Has long been awirl, [5]

*(Aloud)* Vijaya, where is Bhagurayana ?

MAID : Prince, here he is occupied in granting  
 official permits to persons desirous of going out  
 of the camp.

MALAYAKETU : Vijaya, stand still for a moment  
 so I may, while he is still looking the other way,  
 cover his eyes !

MAID : If the Prince so pleases.

(*Enters*)

OFFICER : Noble Sir, a Kshapanaka is here who wishes to see you, sir, for an official permit.

BHAGURAYANA : Admit.

RETAINER : If you please. (*Goes out*)

(*Enters*)

MONK : May the Shravakas attain the way of righteousness.

BHAGURAYANA : (*Observing ; to himself*) Oh ! This is Jivasiddhi, friend of Rakshasa. (*Aloud*) Are you, by any chance, going out with reference to some business of Rakshasa ?

MONK : May sin be extinct ! Shravaka, I intend to go to a place where the very name of neither Rakshasa nor demon is heard.

BHAGURAYANA : You are mighty cross with your friend ! How has Rakshasa offended your reverence ?

MONK : Shravaka, I am not in the least offended with Rakshasa. I am in despair, a miserable person, ashamed of my own doings.

BHAGURAYANA : Your reverence, you are adding to my curiosity. I should like to hear.

MALAYAKETU : (*To himself*) I, too, would like to hear.

MONK : What is the use of listening to what is unfit to be heard ?

BHAGURAYANA : If it is confidential then let it be.

MONK : Shravaka, it is not private ; though outrageous.

BHAGURAYANA : If it is not a secret then you may divulge it.

MONK : Shravaka, it is not a secret, nevertheless I shall not tell.

BHAGURAYANA : I, too, shall not grant the pass.

MONK : (*To himself*) Now is the proper time to tell when he insists. (*Aloud*) There seems no help. May Shravaka be pleased to listen. Formerly when I was a resident in Pataliputra I had the misfortune to be on terms of intimacy with Rakshasa. At that time Rakshasa, having secretly made use of a poison-wench, had Parvateshvara put to death.

MALAYAKETU : (*Tearfully ; to himself*) How is this ! Father was put to death by Rakshasa, not by Chanakya !

BHAGURAYANA : What happened then, your reverence ?

MONK : Thereupon, being considered Rakshasa's friend by the good as dead Chanakya I was expelled, with disgrace,<sup>5</sup> from the capital. Now, too, Rakshasa, adept in all manner of political devices, might start something of that sort whereby I might be pushed out of the world of the living.

BHAGURAYANA : Your reverence, that this heinous deed was done by the accursed Chanakya, unwilling to give up half the kingdom as promised, and not by Rakshasa so we had heard.

MONK : (*Covering the ears*) May sin be extinct ! The very name of the poison-wench was not heard by Chanakya.

BHAGURAYANA : The pass shall be granted. Come, let the Prince hear.

MALAYAKETU : (*Advancing*)

Audible, O friend ! were the words, rending  
the ears,  
Out of his friend's mouth—a statement  
befitting his enemy ;  
By it the misfortune of father's murder,  
Despite long lapse of time,  
Has doubly been augmented this day. [6]

MONK : (*To himself*) Aha ! the good as dead Mala-  
yaketu has heard ! My purpose is served.  
(*Goes out*)

MALAYAKETU : (*Fixing the gaze skyward—as if  
present before him*) Rakshasa ! this is as it should  
be.

‘ This is my friend ’—in this view his state  
of mind  
Was complacent, and, with confidence  
imbued,  
He to you entrusted all his affairs of state ;  
Such was beloved father whose fall you  
caused,  
And with it the tears of his relatives ;  
Conforming to its literal meaning  
O Rakshasa ! thou truly art a monster<sup>6</sup> !  
[7]

BHAGURAYANA : (*To himself*) The life of Rakshasa  
must be safeguarded, such is the injunction of  
the Arya. So it might be done in this wise.  
(*Aloud*) Prince, refrain from vehemence. I  
should like humbly to submit something when  
the Prince has taken his seat.

MALAYAKETU : (*Sits*) Friend, what is it you would  
say ?

**BHAGURAYANA :** Prince, in the case of those who are actively engaged in political affairs it is the exigency of political aims which determines the grouping of belligerents, allies and neutrals ; it does not depend, as is the case with laymen on personal inclinations. Thus, during that epoch, for Rakshasa, whose goal was to crown Sarvarthasiddhi, the king Parvateshvara, blessed be his name, since he was more powerful than even Chandragupta, was the only mighty opponent who stood in the way of his plan. If in the circumstances this had been arranged by Rakshasa it is perhaps not too great a failing as far as I can see. May the prince be pleased to observe,

Friends are, to the category of foe,<sup>7</sup> transferred  
 And, to the category of friends, likewise  
 Through compelling force of political objectives,  
 Are transferred the enemies ;  
 Policy reduces earlier happenings to oblivion,  
 As, while alive, in the case of man  
 Is forgotten the state of his former birth.  
[8]

Thus, for this affair Rakshasa should not be reproached. Moreover, he should be retained in service until the acquisition of Nanda's realm. Beyond that his retention or elimination will be a matter for the Prince's pleasure.

**MALAYAKETU :** Friend, you have viewed it correctly. For, the execution of the minister might lead to upheava among the principal officers which, in turn, might imperil victory.

(*Enters*)

OFFICER: May the Prince be victorious. Noble Sir, Dirgharaksha, in charge of the guard-station, submits—"A man with a letter, who had no permit when about to leave the camp, has been arrested by us. May your honour be pleased to examine him."

BHAGURAYANA: Good fellow, bring him in.

OFFICER: If you please. (*Goes out*)

(*Enters Siddharthaka, pinioned, followed by the Officer*)

SIDDHARTHAKA:

Leading us to appreciate the merits  
Of a diplomatic mission,  
And, from its demerits, to turn the face  
away,  
Loyal devotion to the chief  
Is the mother of people of our sort;  
To her let us bend our heads. [9]

OFFICER: Noble sir, here is the man.

BHAGURAYANA: (*Observing*) Goodman, is he a stray person or in the service of some one in the camp?

SIDDHARTHAKA: Noble sir, I happen to be the servant of the minister Rakshasa.

BHAGURAYANA: Goodman, why then dost thou go out of the camp without taking a passport?

SIDDHARTHAKA: Sir, I had to hurry owing to the urgency of the commission.

BHAGURAYANA: What manner of urgent commission is this for which a royal command is transgressed?



MALAYAKETU : Friend Bhagurayana, remove the letter.

BHAGURAYANA : (*Taking it from Siddharthaka's hand and scrutinising the seal on the letter*) Prince, here is the letter. The seal is marked with the name of Rakshasa.

MALAYAKETU : Open and show, preserving the seal.  
(*Bhagurayana does so and shows*)

MALAYAKETU : (*Reads*)

Hail ! from a suitable place somewhere, a certain person informs a certain distinguished personage. By discarding our rival, truthfulness has been remarkably displayed by the Truthful one. Now it behoves one who is true to his pledge to gratify those friends of ours, who have already entered into pacts of alliance, by encouraging them regarding the stipulated reward of the alliance. When they are thus favoured they will, by destroying the one they are serving, seek refuge with the benefactor. Although not oblivious of this the Truthful one is being reminded. Among these, some desire the enemy's elephants, stores and treasure ; others his territory. Further, the three ornaments sent by the Truthful one have been received. By me, too, a trifle has been sent, so that the letter may not be presented empty-handed, which it is prayed may be accepted. The oral message,<sup>8</sup> also, from Siddharthaka of our most intimate circle, may please be heard.

MALAYAKETU : Bhagurayana, what sort of letter is this ?

BHAGURAYANA : Good Siddharthaka, whose letter is this ?

SIDDHARTHAKA : Sir, I do not know.

BHAGURAYANA : Knave ! Thou carriest the letter and art not aware whose it is ? Never mind all that for a while. By whom was the oral message to be heard ?

SIDDHARTHAKA : (*Quailing*) By you.

BHAGURAYANA : How by us ?

SIDDHARTHAKA : Since I have been arrested by your Grace I know not what I am saying.

BHAGURAYANA : (*Furious*) Thou wilt soon know. Bhasuraka take him outside and let him be flogged <sup>9</sup> until he divulges.

OFFICER : If the minister orders. (*Goes out with him*)

(*Re-entering*)

OFFICER : Noble sir, this sealed packet fell from his armpit.

BHAGURAYANA : (*Looking critically*) Prince, this, too, bears a seal marked with the name of Rakshasa.

MALAYAKETU : Friend, this may be the offering so that the letter may not be presented empty-handed. Open it and show, preserving this seal also. (*Bhagurayana does so and displays*)

MALAYAKETU : (*Scrutinising*) Oh ! it is the ornament which I took off from my own person and sent to Rakshasa. Obviously this letter is for Chandragupta.

BHAGURAYANA : Prince, the puzzle will presently be resolved. Goodman, let him be scourged once more.

OFFICER : If you please. (*Goes out ; re-entering with Siddharthaka*) While he was being flogged he said he would disclose to the Prince only.

MALAYAKETU : Be it so.

SIDDHARTHAKA : (*Falling at his feet*) I pray for an assurance of safety.

MALAYAKETU : Good fellow, persons in the dependent station may, of course, have the assurance of safety. Disclose the facts as they are.

SIDDHARTHAKA : May it please the Prince to listen. I was, in fact, given the letter by the minister Rakshasa and sent to Chandragupta.

MALAYAKETU : Now I should like to hear the oral message.

SIDDHARTHAKA : Prince, I was instructed by the minister in this wise—"These friends of mine the five rajahs, in whom has been inspired friendship towards you, are Chitravarman, ruler of Kuluta, Simhanada, the chief of Malaya, Pushkaraksa, the lord of the land of Kashmira, Sindhusena, rajah of Sindh, and Meghanada the Parasika. Among them the three rajahs, first mentioned, desire the territory of Malayaketu; while the others his elephant force, stores and treasure. So, as by discarding Chanakya the Fortunate one has made no rejoice, in the same way he should fulfil the aforesaid promises made to them." Such was the message to be delivered orally.

MALAYAKETU : (*To himself*) What ! Chitravarman and the rest are acting treasonably towards me ! Why, so it must be. They are inordinately fond of Rakshasa. (*Aloud*) Vijaya, I wish to see Rakshasa.

MAID : As the Prince orders. (*Goes out*)

### SCENE III

Rakshasa's Dwelling in the Camp.

*(Then is discovered Rakshasa, seated in his own quarters, attended by a Retainer, looking worried)*

RAKSHASA: To tell the truth, my mind is not clear of suspicion that our army should be filled with men belonging to the forces of Chandragupta, For,

An army which has a planned objective,  
Is, by reinforcements, strengthened,  
And is averse to elements hostile to its  
cause,

Makes for victory; but an army,  
Which alike to both the sides is well dis-  
posed,

Or is to its own cause hostile,  
The maintenance of such an army  
Will tend to the overthrow of its chief.  
Just as in a syllogism the middle term  
which

Is capable of being joined by the major  
term

In an affirmative proposition,  
Is strengthened by the agreement  
Of similar cases, while disagreeing  
With dissimilar cases, and which is simul-  
taneously

In agreement with the minor term,  
Brings victory; but the debater<sup>10</sup> who relies  
On a middle term of unknown affirmation  
with the major term,

Which goes alike with similar and dissimilar  
cases,

And is not, at the same time, agreeable to  
the minor term,

Suffers defeat.

[10]

Or perhaps, I need have no misgivings since the reasons for their discontent are wellknown and they were first won over through our whispering propaganda. (*Aloud*) Good Priyamvadaka, say from me to the rajahs who are the adherents of the Prince "Now, day by day, Kusumapura is coming closer. So you should please march, during the advance, in divisions as arranged.

In the van<sup>11</sup> shall march the Khasha and  
Magadha troops,  
In battle array, the Gandharas shall en-  
deavour  
In the centre, with the Yavana chiefs, to  
collaborate ;  
Let the rear by the gallant Shaka rajahs be  
guarded  
In concert with the China and Huna troops,  
Whilst the rajahs of Kuluta, and other  
chiefs select,  
May escort the Prince during the stages of  
the march. " [11]

PRIYAMVADAKA : If you please. (*Goes out*)

(*Enters*)

MAID : Victory to the minister. The Prince wishes to see you.

RAKSHASA : Good lady, wait a while. Is anyone here ?

(*Enters*)

RETAINER : Your orders please, minister.

RAKSHASA : Tell Shakata-dasa that the Prince has given me ornaments to wear. Thus, it would be improper to have an audience with the Prince without decorations. So, he should please give one out of the three ornaments which have been purchased.

RETAINER : If you please. (*Goes out and re-enters*)  
Minister, here is the ornament.

RAKSHASA : (*Decorating himself and rising*) Good  
lady, indicate the way leading to the presence  
of royalty.

MAID : The minister may please come.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) An office of power is,  
truly, even for the guiltless a position fraught  
with grave apprehensions.

By fear of the one whom he serves  
Is the person in service primarily obsessed;  
Then, by fear, which lies dormant in the  
breast,  
Of those who with the lord are in close  
proximity;  
Then, again, in the case of those who to  
power have risen,  
The office engenders jealousy in evil minds;  
The course of those who attain a place of  
eminence  
Is, seemingly, inclined towards a fall. [12]

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SCENE IV.

The Pavilion.

MAID : (*Walking*) Minister, there is the Prince.  
May the minister be pleased to approach him.

RAKSHASA : (*Seeing*) Here is the Prince ! He who,  
Fixing on the tip of his toes,  
The eyes unmoving, unregarding any object,  
Rests on the hand his moonlike visage,  
As if bent, with modesty, with the burden  
Of state affairs difficult to sustain. [13]

(*Approaching*) May the Prince be victorious.

MALAYAKETU : Sir, I salute. Here is a seat ;  
please be seated. (*Rakshasa does so*)

MALAYAKETU : Sir, we were uneasy since it is a  
long time that we had a glimpse of your honour.

RAKSHASA : Prince, being occupied with measures  
to organize the advance I have made myself  
liable to this reproach from the Prince.

MALAYAKETU : Sir, I should like to hear how the  
march has been organized.

RAKSHASA : Prince, the rajahs, our adherents,  
have been instructed in this wise. (*Recites 'In  
the van shall march the Khasha, etc.'* already  
recited)

MALAYAKETU : (*To himself*) How now ! the very  
persons who by destroying me are intent on  
placating Chandragupta are to surround me !  
(*Aloud*) Sir, is there anyone who has to go to  
Kusuma-pura or come from there ?

RAKSHASA : The reason for journeys to and fro  
has come to an end. In a few days we ourselves  
shall be marching in there.

MALAYAKETU : (*To himself*) We know it. (*Aloud*)  
If that is so, why then was this man despatched  
with a letter by your honour ?

RAKSHASA : (*Seeing*) Ha ! Siddharthaka ! Good-  
man, what is all this ?

SIDDHARTHAKA : (*Plaintively ; shows he is ashamed*)  
May it please the minister, I was unable, while  
being flogged, to keep the secret !

RAKSHASA : Goodman, what sort of secret ? I  
really fail to understand !

SIDDHARTHAKA : Indeed I beg to submit that when  
I was being flogged--(*when thus half-uttered,*  
*looks down*)

MALAYAKETU : Bhagurayana, in front of the master,  
either through fear or shame this fellow will  
not speak. You yourself had better tell his  
honour.

BHAGURAYANA : If the Prince so orders. Minister,  
this fellow has thus stated "I was given a  
letter by the minister with instructions to  
deliver an oral message and sent to Chandra-  
gutpa."

RAKSHASA : Good Siddharthaka, is this true ?

SIDDHARTHAKA : (*Exhibiting shame*) Thus I stated  
while I was being excessively beaten.

RAKSHASA : This is a lie ! What is it, when  
beaten, a man might not say !

MALAYAKETU : Friend Bhagurayana, show the  
letter ; the servant will repeat the oral message.

BHAGURAYANA : Minister, here is the letter.

RAKSHASA : (*Reading*) Prince, this is a machination  
of the enemy.



**MALAYAKETU :** So that the letter may not be delivered empty handed, this ornament, too, was sent by your honour. Then how is this the ruse of the enemy ?

**RAKSHASA :** (*Looking searchingly at the ornament*)  
This was sent to me by the Prince. I gave it as a gift to Siddharthaka on a certain occasion of rejoicing.

**BHAGURAYANA :** Is this fellow worthy to receive as a gift such a precious thing, especially one which the Prince, having taken off his own person, had graciously given as a gift !

**MALAYAKETU :** Further, it is written by you, Sir, that the oral message should be heard from this man.

**RAKSHASA :** Whence the oral message and whose word of mouth ! The letter itself has nothing to do with me !

**MALAYAKETU :** If so, whose is this seal ?

**RAKSHASA :** The crafty are able to fabricate spurious seals.

**BHAGURAYANA :** Prince, the minister's submission is correct. Good Siddharthaka, by whom was this letter written ?

(*Siddharthaka looks at the face of Rakshasa ; stands silent, with head cast down*)

**BHAGURAYANA :** Goodman, refrain from getting yourself flogged again. Speak !

**SIDDHARTHAKA :** By Shakata-dasa, noble Sir.

**RAKSHASA :** Prince, if by Shakata-dasa, then virtually it is written by me.

**MALAYAKETU :** Vijaya, I wish to see Shakata-dasa.

MAID : If the Prince so orders.

BHAGURAYANA : (*To himself*) The secret agents of the honourable Chanakya would surely not make a statement of which the facts are inaccurate. (*Aloud*) Prince, in the presence of the minister, Shakata-dasa is not likely ever to admit that it was written by him. Therefore, let a specimen of his writing be brought and a comparison of the letters will itself settle this.

MALAYAKETU : Vijaya, please do so.

MAID : Prince, and the seal ?

MALAYAKETU : And please bring both.

MAID : If the Prince orders. (*Goes out and re-enters*) Prince, here is a letter, written with his own hand by Shakata-dasa, and the seal also.

MALAYAKETU : (*Examining both critically*) Sir, the letters tally.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) The letters correspond. That Shakata-dasa is a friend is a phrase which, however, fails to correspond in fact. Could it be that Shakata-dasa,

Remembering son and wife,  
Had forgotten fidelity to the lord,  
And tempted by evanescent ends,  
Is oblivious of the glory everlasting ! [14]

Or rather where is the doubt ?

The signet-ring is the one wedded to his  
finger,  
Siddharthaka is a friend of his ;  
And the other writing has revealed that  
The document was a fabrication of his  
own,

Manifestly Shakata, in league with the foe  
Adept in sowing dissensions, has turned  
aside

His face from devotion to the lord ;  
And sueing for the lives of his loved ones  
Cravenly has committed this deed. [15]

**MALAYAKETU :** (*Observing*) Sir, you have written  
that the three ornaments which the illustrious  
one has sent have been received ; was this one  
of them ? (*Looking searchingly ; to himself*)  
How now ! this is an ornament formerly worn  
by father. (*Aloud*) Sir, whence came this  
ornament ?

**RAKSHASA :** It was acquired by purchase from  
merchants.

**MALAYAKETU :** Vijaya, can you recognize this  
ornament ?

**MAID :** (*Scrutinising ; with eyes misty*) How should  
I fail to recognize ! This was formerly worn  
by Parvateshvara, blessed be his name.

**MALAYAKETU :** (*Overcome*) Alas, father !

These are the trinkets familiar  
Which you, lover of the art of decoration,<sup>12</sup>  
Deemed worthy of your limbs,  
O ornament of our clan !  
With these resplendent, your moon-like  
visage  
Bore semblance with the star-spangled  
Twilight in autumn. [16]

**RAKSHASA :** (*To himself*) What ! She said it was  
formerly worn by Parvateshvara ! It is very  
clear they were his ornaments. (*Aloud*) These,  
no doubt, were sold to me by a merchant  
employed by Chanakya.

MALAYAKETU : Sir, the sale to merchants, of what formerly was worn by father and which especially had fallen into the hands of Chandragupta, is not plausible. Or, perhaps one should say it is very fit and proper.

Since,

For Chandragupta the vendor,  
Who excess profits desired  
For these,  
We were the purchase price  
Ruthlessly reckoned by you. [17]

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) It is startling how perfectly the enemy's stratagem is welded.

That the letter is not mine is no answer  
Since mine is the seal,  
That Shakata-dasa has broken faith,  
How should that carry conviction ;  
As for the Maurya—who could possibly  
conceive  
A sale of trinkets by royalty !  
Thus I should rather yield herein  
As the better way than vouch  
Inelegant reply. [18]

MALAYAKETU : I ask you this as a man of honour—

RAKSHASA : (*Ruefully*) Prince, ask him who is honourable ; I am now turned a dishonourable man.

MALAYAKETU :

The Maurya, scion of your former master  
Would claim your subservience,  
While I am the son of your friend ;  
Donor of wealth he would be for you,  
While you would give me,  
In accordance with your own views.

Servitude, ceremoniously exalted,  
 Would, indeed, be the office of minister  
 There for you; while here it would be  
 autocracy.

For what selfish ends, surpassing even this,  
 Has ambition urged you to act  
 In the manner of a knave! [19]

RAKSHASA: Thus saying unfair things you have  
 given your decision. Be it so. How are you  
 to blame? (*Recites the verse "The Maurya,  
 scion of your former master"<sup>13</sup> replacing "I" by  
 "You" "your" by "my" and "you" by "me."*)

MALAYAKETU: (*Pointing to the letter and the packet  
 containing the ornament*) And how about this?

RAKSHASA: (*Plaintively*) It is the whim of Fate.

For,

In servitude is room for treatment humili-  
 ating,  
 Yet the discreet masters, of cultivated  
 minds,  
 Good work appreciated and, through fond  
 attachment,  
 Distinguished us not from their own sons;  
 Such rulers of the land, who could the  
 people's character assess,  
 Are by wicked Providence destroyed;  
 Such is its manifold wantonness  
 Cutting at the root of human endeavour.<sup>14</sup>

[20]

MALAYAKETU: (*Furious*) What! Do you still per-  
 sist in the denial? Is this, indeed, the wanton-  
 ness of Fate and not of greed? Miscreant!

Using a maid with sharp poison saturate  
 You erst made my trustful father,  
 O ungrateful one! the remnant

Of a tale in the mouth of the people ;  
 And, now, highly esteeming ministerial  
 Office and dignity with the enemy—  
 It is amazing!—you are prepared,  
 Like so much flesh,<sup>15</sup> to sell us. [21]

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) This is an additional ulcer  
 on top of an abscess. (*Aloud*) May sin be extinct !  
 May sin die down ! Never did I make use  
 of any poison-wench against Parvateshvara !

MALAYAKETU : By whom then was father put to  
 death ?

RAKSHASA : Providence should be asked about it.

MALAYAKETU : (*Infuriated*) Providence should be  
 questioned for it and not the monk Jivasiddhi !

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) What ! Jivasiddhi, too,  
 is Chanakya's secret agent ! Alas ! the enemy  
 has claimed as its own my very heart.

MALAYAKETU : (*Exploding with rage*) Bhasuraka !  
 convey my order to Shikharasena thus—"These  
 five rajahs, Chitravarman of Kuluta, Simhanada,  
 ruler of Malaya, Pushkaraksha of Kashmira,  
 Sindhushena, rajah of Sindh, and Meghanada,  
 lord of the Parasika, having arrived at an  
 amicable arrangement with Rakshasa, by trea-  
 son against our person, are desirous of pro-  
 pitiating Chandragupta ; the first three of them  
 covet my territory. Put them into a deep pit  
 and fill up with earth. The remaining two  
 covet our force of elephants ; let them be  
 trampled to death by elephants."<sup>16</sup>

OFFICER : The command shall be obeyed. (*Goes  
 out*)

**MALAYAKETU :** (*Menacingly*) Rakshasa ! I am not  
a friend who murders the trustful. I happen  
to be Malayaketu. So, depart. Thou mayst,  
with all thy heart seek shelter with Chandra-  
gupta.

Look,

With Vishnu-gupta and the Maurya  
For thy associates shouldst thou  
Come to the encounter,  
I have the power to uproot all three,  
As evil strategy eradicates the threefold  
aim. [22]

**BHAGURAYANA :** Prince, let there be no more loss  
of time. May you be pleased to pass orders  
immediately for our forces to lay siege to Ku-  
suma-pura.

Let the pale cheeks, fragrant with the  
powder of Lodhra<sup>17</sup> flowers,  
Of the women of Gauda be darkened,  
Whilst the sheen of their tresses of curly  
hair,  
Black like a swarm of bees, is eclipsed  
By columns of dust of our armed  
forces  
Raised by the hoof-beats of the cavalry in  
action ;  
And may the dust-columns, cut from their  
base  
By liquid sprays of the war elephants,  
Fall on the heads of our foe. [23]

(*Malayaketu goes out with his suite*)

**RAKSHASA :** (*Desperately*) Woe is me ! What a tragedy ! Those poor wretches, Chitravarman and others, have also to suffer death ! Does it mean that the efforts of Rakshasa are to result in the annihilation of his friends and not his foe ? Then, where could I, a lack-fortune, now turn ?

Should I to the wilds retire for penance ?  
Not through penance could the vengeful  
mind

Lie quiescent ;

Should the liege-lord be followed in death ?

This might, for women, be meet,

Whilst the enemy survives ;

Should I fall on the enemy host,

With the sword, for the sake of my friend ?

That, too, would seem inappropriate,

Since, my mind, aching for release of

Chandana-dasa,

Would prove an obstacle ;

It were ungrateful were it not so. [24]

(*All go out*)

**END OF THE FIFTH ACT**

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## SIXTH ACT

### SCENE I

Street in Pataliputra.

*(Enter Siddharthaka, decorated)*

SIDDHARTHAKA : *(Beaming)*

Glory be to Keshava,  
Sombre like the rain-cloud,  
Destroyer of Keshin ;<sup>1</sup>  
Also, glory be to Chandragupta,  
The moon of delight,  
For the people's eye-sight ;  
Triumphant is the diplomacy of honoured  
Chanakya  
Whose counter-thrust at the enemy  
Completes the task of victory. [1]

After a long time I shall now see the dear friend  
Samiddharthaka. *(Walks about and sees)* Here  
is my good friend Samiddharthaka coming in this  
very direction. So, I may meet him.

*(Enters Samiddharthaka)*

SAMIDDHARTHAKA :

To be separated from friends,  
For whom there is a place in their hearts,  
Is a vexation to persons, living  
In ease and comfort, while they  
Drink in wine<sup>2</sup> shops or during  
Carousals at home. [2]

I have heard that the good friend Siddharthaka  
has arrived from Malayaketu's camp. I shall  
look for him. *(Strolls along and observes)* Here  
is Siddharthaka !

SIDDHARTHAKA : (*Approaching*) Why, Samiddharthaka ! Is it well with the dear friend ?

(*They embrace each other*)

SAMIDDHARTHAKA : How could it be well since you, though returned from a long journey, would not so far turn up at my house !

SIDDHARTHAKA : Please forgive, friend ! No sooner was the interview with the honourable Chanakya over than I was told—"Siddharthaka, go, report this happy news to his majesty the illustrious Chandra." Then after reporting to him and, as you see, having become the recipient of royal favour, I set out, in order to see the good friend, for your very house.

SAMIDDHARTHAKA : Friend, if it is something I may hear, then tell me what that glad news was which you reported to the illustrious Chandra, dear to the sight.<sup>3</sup>

SIDDHARTHAKA : Friend, is there anything which cannot be disclosed even to you ? So, listen. It so happened that the good as dead Malayaketu, when his understanding was deluded by Chanakya's statecraft, drove Rakshasa away and put to death the five principal rajahs Chitravarman and others. Thereupon, considering him a person, lacking in foresight, who had behaved abominably, the ruling chiefs felt alarmed and their soldiers and retainers were in a fearful frenzy. The chiefs skilfully got out of Malayaketu's camp. Then while all the feudatories of Malayaketu had become down-hearted, Bhadrabhata, Purusha-datta, Dingarata, Balagupta, Rajasena, Bhagurayana, Rohitaksa, Vijaya-varman and the rest obtained control over Malayaketu and took him prisoner.

**SAMIDDHARTHAKA:** Friend, Bhadrabhata and others being, in fact, disaffected towards his majesty Chandragupta, had sought shelter with Malayaketu so it was said, in confidence, among the people. Why then was there, like the play of an indifferent dramatist, one thing in the prelude and another in the dénouement ?<sup>4</sup>

**SIDDHARTHAKA :** Friend, bow to Chanakya's strategy inscrutable like the course of Providence.

**SAMIDDHARTHAKA :** Then what happened ?

**SIDDHARTHAKA :** With that as a starting point the honourable Chanakya sallied forth with a select force and overpowered the entire Mlechha host which was without a king.

**SAMIDDHARTHAKA :** Friend, where is it ?

**SIDDHARTHAKA :** Where,

The tusk-ers, arrogant with excessively  
Heavy ichor, dark like water-bearing clouds,  
Are trumpeting and swaying ;  
Nervous of the whip, tremulously plunging,  
Excited by slogans of victory,  
The horses are rearing. [3]

**SAMIDDHARTHAKA :** Friend, so that's that. The honourable Chanakya, however, had renounced office publicly while the eyes of all people were turned on him ; does this mean that he has risen once more to the very same office of minister ?

**SIDDHARTHAKA :** You are such a simpleton still that you would probe the actions of the honourable Chanakya hitherto unfathomed by even the minister Rakshasa !

**SAMIDDHARTHAKA :** Friend, where now is the minister Rakshasa ?

SIDDHARTHAKA : Pending the confusion resulting from that panic he got out of Malayaketu's camp, closely followed by the spy named Udumbaraka, and has arrived here in Pataliputra ; so it has been reported to the honourable Chanakya.

SAMIDDHARTHAKA : Friend, so the minister Rakshasa, who had gone away in that manner to organize an attempt for the restoration of the Nanda regime, having failed to achieve his purpose has once again come to Pataliputra after all !

SIDDHARTHAKA : That is due to his love for Chandana-dasa, I guess.

SAMIDDHARTHAKA : Friend, it might lead to the release of Chandana-dasa as far as I can see.

SIDDHARTHAKA : Whence can there be the release of this unblest fellow ? In fact, the two of us are to conduct him, forthwith, as ordered by the honourable Chanakya, to the place of execution and put him to death.

SAMIDDHARTHAKA : (*Indignant*) What ! Has not the honourable Chanakya others who are executioners that we should be ordered to do such nefarious jobs !

SIDDHARTHAKA : Who, in this world of the living, desiring to survive, will go counter to the command of the honourable Chanakya ! So, come. Dressed in the garb of executioners let us take Chandana-dasa to the execution ground.

(*Both go out*)

END OF THE INTERLUDE

## SCENE II

An old garden in the outskirts of Pataliputra.

*(Then enters a man rope in hand)*

MAN :

Like a well made rope,  
Firm by virtue of its six-fold<sup>5</sup> entwining ;  
With a loop for its face,  
To ensnare by a series of devices,  
Triumphant is Chanakya's strategy,  
Bent upon controlling the enemy. [4]

*(Strolls and looks around)* This is the spot, according to the report of Udumbaraka to the honourable Chanakya, where by his honour's order I have to keep under observation the minister Rakshasa. *(Peering)* How now ! very likely this is the minister Rakshasa, wrapped in a mantle, coming in this very direction. So, meanwhile, I had better watch, with my body screened by these garden shrubs, where he will make the choice of a seat.

*(Then enters, as described, Rakshasa with a sword)*

RAKSHASA : *(Plaintively)* Alas ! What a shame !

When the support of her mansion was cut,  
Royal sovereignty, like a harlot,  
Timorously shifted to another clan ;<sup>6</sup>  
And she has been followed by subjects,  
Devoid of loyalty, accustomed to trail  
After deserting crowds ; men of our group,  
Failing to receive the rewards  
Of their manly endeavour, have ceased to  
uphold

The aims of our political action.  
How indeed could they act ? For they are  
But the limbs of the body minus the head.

[5]

Moreover,

Forsaking her royal husband,  
The lord of the world, of high lineage,  
Royal sovereignty has gone, through a  
loop-hole,  
Like an immodest woman of ignoble birth,  
To Vrishala ; and to him is firmly attached.  
What could one do here !  
Despite our efforts sustained,  
Fate frustrates like an enemy. [6]

By me, however,

When his majesty—undeserving death  
In that manner—had, for heaven, departed  
An attempt was made to enlist  
The ruler of the hills ;  
Upon his death, though his son  
Has been approached, there is yet no suc-  
cess.  
Providence, to be sure, is the foe  
Of Nanda's race, not this Brahmana. [7]

Oh ! what lack of discrimination on the part  
of the Mleccha !

' Who serves his masters destroyed,  
Together with the seed of their race,  
How could this Rakshasa, while yet un-  
scathed,  
Sue for terms of peace with their enemy' ;  
Even so much, the Mleccha,  
With wits devoid of judgment,  
Failed to perceive ;  
Perchance doth Providence wholly pervert  
The mind of him whom it intends to smite.' [8]

Thus, even at this stage, Rakshasa would prefer  
to fall into the enemy's hands and perish rather  
than negotiate with Chandragupta. In any

event better for me the disrepute that I was a promise-breaker than that I should be overcome by the enemy's bluff. (*Looking around ; ruefully*) These are the very environs of Kusumapura where the ground is sanctified by familiar contact, in passing, with the feet of his majesty.

For here,

Slackening his hold on the bridle,  
While he stretched the bow the arrows  
to release,

It was in this region that his majesty,  
On his charger, at a gallop, marvellously,  
Released the arrows at the moving targets;<sup>8</sup>  
Here, in this sylvan glade he halted,  
And there, with the rajahs conversed ;  
To behold the environs of Kusumapura,  
Without them, is exceedingly harrowing.

[9]

Then, where could a hapless person go ? (*Gazing*)  
Be it so. I notice the old garden. I shall go  
in here and may somehow get news of Chandana-  
dasa. Men are unable to foresee how their  
condition in life, favourable or unfavourable,  
would turn out eventually.

For,

The citizens pointed with their fingers  
At me, as at the new moon,<sup>9</sup> whilst I,  
In fashion leisurely, passed out of the capital,

Like a monarch, in days gone by,  
Escorted by a thousand rajahs ;  
I am the very person who, when his efforts  
have proved sterile,

Clandestinely seeks to enter, once again,  
In the same city, this ruined garden,  
Scared like a thief.

[10]

Anyway, those persons by whose grace all this  
had been possible are themselves no more.  
(*Enters and looks around*) O ! how unattractive  
is this ruined garden !

For here,

The pavilion with its structure grandiose,  
Like a dynasty by mighty exploits built,  
Has crumbled ; the pleasure-pond is dry,  
Like a good man's heart at the loss of his  
friends ;

The trees, devoid of fruit, are like political  
measures

Associated with a worthless king ;

The ground is strewn with rank weeds,

Like the mind of the unwise

Full of impracticable schemes of policy. [11]

And,

The limbs of trees, wounded

By fearful blows of sharp axes,

Are, through incessant cooing of doves,

As if moaning with pain ;

The snakes, shedding their own slough,

In sympathy with the distress of familiar  
friends,

Are, with sighs, as it were bandaging

The wounds on the branches. [12]

And these trees, poor wretches—

Openly reveal the drying up process

In the interior of their bodies ;

Discharging, as if they were tears,

The sap exuding from bore-holes made by ,  
pests ;

Looking soiled through separation

From the shady foliage, the trees,

In sadness submerged, appear

As if preparing to depart for their funeral.<sup>10</sup>

[13]



So, I may sit awhile on this broken stone seat  
 which is available to me in my altered and  
 rugged circumstances. (*Sits and listens*) Ah!  
 What is this fanfare which has suddenly be-  
 come audible ?

Affronting the ear-drums and by its  
 magnitude  
 Rendering useless the sense of hearing,  
 As if swallowed up and thrown out  
 Forthwith by the multitude of palaces,  
 This sound of jubilation, mingling with  
 the rattle  
 Of the kettledrums and the triton-shells,  
 Is spreading as if, through curiosity, to test  
 The remoteness of the horizon. [14]

(*Musing*) Oh I know! This, no doubt, sig-  
 nalizes the great jubilation of the royal court  
 (*Having said so, continues with bitterness*) of  
 the court of the Maurya, engendered by the  
 subjugation of Malayaketu. (*Plaintively*) Alas !

I have been compelled to hearken  
 To the splendid triumph, and to witness,  
 As well, a demonstration of the enemy's  
 glory ;  
 Methinks, to make me experience this in  
 person,  
 Will presently be the attempt of Providence.  
 [15]

MAN : He is seated. I had better carry out the  
 instructions of the honourable Chanakya.  
 (*As if unperceiving Rakshasa, in front of him,  
 ties the neck with the loop of a cord*)

RAKSHASA : (*Looking*) How now ! This poor  
 wretch, weary like myself, is about to hang  
 himself. That's that. I shall question him.  
 (*Aloud*) Goodman, why must this be done ?

MAN : (*Tearfully*) Noble sir, this is what a person miserable like me, bereaved by the loss of a loving comrade, would do.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) I was certain, at the very outset, that this poor fellow was, like me, in sore distress. (*Aloud*) O companion in misery ! if it is neither a secret nor too much of a burden I should like to hear.

MAN : Noble sir, it is not a secret and not very burdensome. But my heart is wrung with the loss of a beloved companion ; I cannot, by even so much as this, delay death.

RAKSHASA : (*Sighing ; to himself*) Fie ! here I am, a person quite indifferent to the perils of a friend, thrown into the background by this man ! (*Aloud*) If it is nothing private and not too burdensome I am anxious to hear.

MAN : Oh ! your honour does constrain. I shall relate. There is in this city the provost of the goldsmiths<sup>11</sup> guild by name Vishnu-dasa.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) Vishnu-dasa is the intimate companion of Chandana-dasa. (*Aloud*) What about him ?

MAN : It is he who is my beloved friend.

RAKSHASA : (*Brightening ; to himself*) Ah ! "beloved friend" he said. It is the closest of relationships. Good. He surely would know the news about Chandana-dasa. (*Aloud*) Goodman, what of him ?

MAN : He, having given away his wealth, apparel and the like, has now gone out of the capital intent on entering the blazing fire.<sup>12</sup> I, too, before I hear news of him, unfit for the ear, have come for self-destruction to this ruined garden.

RAKSHASA : Goodman, what is the reason for your friend to enter the fire ?

Is he, by some terrible malady  
Incurable by drugs, affected ?

MAN : No, no.

RAKSHASA : Is he by royal wrath,  
Resembling fire and poison, devastated ?

MAN : Noble sir, may evil be quelled ! In Chandragupta's territory there can be no outrageous course of action.

RAKSHASA : Say, is he in love  
With a woman unavailable to him ?

MAN : May sin be extinct ! Indeed there is no room in his case for impropriety.

RAKSHASA : Is there in his case, as with you,  
The death inevitable of a bosom friend ? <sup>13</sup>  
[16]

MAN : Precisely.

RAKSHASA : (*Distraught ; to himself*) Vishnu-dasa is the dear friend of Chandana-dasa, whose death is the reason for his entering the devouring fire. In truth, such perfect devotion and adherence to friendship have roused my mind to action. (*Aloud*) I should like to hear in detail of the noble deeds and the end of him who is resolved to terminate his life through tender affection for a beloved friend.

MAN : Beyond this I am unable, miserable being that I am, to put an impediment in my death.

RAKSHASA : Goodman, the tale deserves to be listened to respectfully—narrate.

MAN : There is no other course. I shall presently relate. Listen, please, noble sir.

RAKSHASA : Goodman, I am attentive.

MAN : There lives here in this capital the provost of the guild of jewellers named Chandana-dasa.

RAKSHASA : (*Ruefully ; to himself*) Here is the door left ajar to initiate me into sorrow by Providence. Be calm, O heart ! there follows something dreadfully hard to hear. (*Aloud*) Goodman, one hears of him as a saintly person lovingly indulgent towards friends.<sup>14</sup> What about him ?

MAN : He is an intimate friend of this Vishnu-dasa.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) Quite close is the fall of the thunderbolt to overwhelm the heart.

MAN : Thus Vishnu-dasa made a request, worthy of his love for his friend, to Chandragupta today—

RAKSHASA : Say, what was it ?

MAN : It was in this wise—"Sire, in my house there is wealth amply sufficient for the maintenance of the family. In exchange for it may you be pleased to release Chandana-dasa."

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) Bravo ! Vishnu-dasa ! It is a wonderful way to show your affection for a friend !

For,

Sons slay fathers and fathers the sons  
As if they were strangers ; that for whose  
sake  
Friends renounce, at will, friendship with  
their associates,

This beloved wealth, as if it were some  
vicious habit,

You were prepared at once to give up.

Your wealth has served a good purpose ;

As an efficient merchant, of the trading  
class,

You know how to make a good bargain !

[17]

(*Aloud*) So, when he was thus addressed what  
did the Maurya decide ?

MAN : Noble sir, when thus petitioned Chandragupta replied to the provost Vishnu-dasa--  
“ Not for the sake of money has Chandana-dasa been placed under restraint by me ; it has, in fact, been ascertained in many ways that he has concealed the family of the minister Rakshasa. Further, though repeatedly asked he has declined to hand over. If he would yet deliver the family he can have his release. Otherwise the penalty is the forfeiture of his life.” So saying he ordered that Chandana-dasa be taken to the place of execution. Thereupon, the provost Vishnu-dasa went out of the city in order to enter the flames before he could hear news, which one does not desire to hear, about Chandana-dasa.

RAKSHASA : Chandana-dasa has actually not been executed !

MAN : Today he is to be executed. Meanwhile they are repeatedly demanding from him the family of the minister Rakshasa. And he, through devotion to his friend, refuses to hand over. For this reason there has been delay in the execution.

RAKSHASA : (*Exhilarated ; to himself*) Bravo, friend Chandana-dasa!

As by Shibi<sup>15</sup> acquired,  
By guarding in the absence of your friend,  
Those who had sought asylum,  
O gentle one ! you, too, have  
Piled up glory. [18]

(*Aloud*) Goodman, hurry ! Quickly stop Vishnu-dasa from entering the fire. I shall rescue Chandana-dasa from death.

MAN : By what means, then, would you save Chandana-dasa from death ?

RAKSHASA : (*Drawing the sword*) Indeed with this, the helpmate in a crisis !

Look !

This sword of mine, resembling  
The azure sky with its water-giving clouds,  
An intimate friend of the hand,  
Is tremulous in expectation of the fray ;  
The excellence of its virtue and worth  
Has, on the touchstone of battle,  
Been tested by my enemies ;  
It now urges me, for love of friend,  
Uncontrollably to plunge into adventure. [19]

MAN : Noble sir, the offer of preserving the life of Chandana-dasa indicates, although I am unable to say with certitude owing to your having fallen on uneven circumstances, that I have the good fortune to see the feet of the minister Rakshasa, blessed be his name. So, do me the favour of resolving the doubt. (*Falls at his feet*)

RAKSHASA : I am that Rakshasa who has witnessed the annihilation of his liege-lord, who has been the root-cause of his friends' misfortunes, who is lacking in honour, whose name is a curse and means appropriately a monster !

MAN : (*Beaming ; falls at his feet again*) This is wonderful ! I have achieved my purpose.

RAKSHASA : Goodman ! arise quickly. Enough of this waste of time. Say to Vishnu-dasa that Rakshasa will presently rescue Chandana-dasa from death. (*Recites "This sword of mine etc." and moves about with the drawn sword*)

MAN : Minister, sometime ago, it so happened that the good as dead Chandragupta had ordered Shakata-dasa to the place of execution. From the execution ground he was carried away by some one and removed to another land. So the accursed Chandragupta enquired why negligence had occurred and the fire of his anger, kindled by the gentle Shakata-dasa, was extinguished by the death of the executioners. From that time onwards, the executioners, if they see, either in the rear or in front, any unknown person with arms, whoever he may be, then in order to preserve their own lives they quickly put the victim to death even before reaching the place of execution. Thus, if the minister were to go armed it might hasten the death of the provost Chandana-dasa. (*Goes out*)

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) Oh how undiscoverable is the path of the wily Chanakya's diplomacy !

For,

If Shakata by consent of the enemy  
Were led to my presence, why were slain,  
In a fit of temper, the men empowered  
To execute him ;  
If that deed was not fabricated,  
How could he possibly have done it ;  
Thus my mind, with mounting speculations,  
Is imprecise and reaches no conclusion. [20]

*(Reflecting)*

This is no time for the sword,  
Since the executioners strike in anticipa-  
tion ;

A move diplomatic—displaying fruit  
In course of time—what end could it serve ;  
For a dear friend who, for my sake,  
Is to a terrible danger exposed,  
I ween, it were possible to reckon,  
In exchange for him,  
The offer of my own person. [21]

*(All go out)*

END OF THE SIXTH ACT

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## SEVENTH ACT

### SCENE I

Place of Execution at Pataliputra.

(*Enters a Chandala*<sup>1</sup>)

CHANDALA : Make way, good folks ! move on.

Life, property, the wife and family,  
If you believe are worth preserving,  
Then stay very far away,  
From conduct prejudicial to the king,  
Which, like poison, is fraught with peril.

[1]

Moreover,

A man may fall ill,  
Should he take to a course  
Prejudicial to health, or perish ;  
Should he, however, betake a course  
Prejudicial to the king,  
The entire family would also perish.<sup>2</sup>

[2]

So, if you are not convinced, look ! here is the provost Chandana-dasa, guilty of acts prejudicial to the king, being taken, with his wife and son, to the execution ground. (*Listening in the air*) Gentlemen, what say you ? "Is there any way for his release ?" Yes, there is, gentlemen, if he would deliver the family of the minister Rakshasa. (*Again in the air*) What do you say—"he has a tender affection for those who sought asylum with him ; merely for the sake of his own life he would never do such an unworthy act." Then, gentlemen, in your opinion his future path is happy. Why then need you bother to think of remedial measures in this affair ?

*(Then enters, escorted by the second Chandala, Chandana-dasa, in the garb of the victim, carrying the stake on the shoulder<sup>3</sup> and followed by his wife and son)*

WIFE: *(Tearfully)* Heigho! Even for us, who ever fear to contravene the rules of good conduct, there is to be death fit for thieves. So a salutation to the Leveller. Or, perhaps, the ruthless make no distinction between those who are above worldly temptation and the rest.

He fears death,  
And, renouncing flesh,  
Subsists on wisps of grass;  
Why, with obstinacy, do hunters persist  
In slaying the innocent gazelle! [3]

*(Looking around)* O good friend Vishnu-dasa! how is it that you do not even respond to my call! Or, perhaps, rare indeed are the human beings who at such a time would stand by even to be visible.

CHANDANA-DASA: Here are our dear friends, to whom the shedding of tears is the only anodyne, who, keeping themselves in the rear, are following me with grief-stricken faces turned aside and eyes laden with tears.

CHANDALA: Chandana-dasa, sir, you have arrived at the execution ground. So, take leave of the members of the household.

CHANDANA-DASA: Mistress of the family! Go back now with the son. Indeed, it is not proper beyond this to follow.

WIFE: *(Tearfully)* Noble sir, you are starting for the next world; not to go abroad!

CHANDANA-DASA : Gentle lady. I am to die for the cause of our colleagues and not on account of human frailty. So, refrain from lamentation.

WIFE : Noble sir, that being so this is not the moment for a woman of good breeding to turn back.

CHANDANA-DASA : How now ! What is the mistress of the family resolved to do ?

WIFE : That I should confer a favour on myself by following in the footsteps of the lord.<sup>4</sup>

CHANDANA-DASA : Good lady, the resolution is not rightly conceived by you. This little son, not conversant with the affairs of the world, is immature.<sup>5</sup> He deserves your favour.

WIFE : May the gods be pleased to confer favours on him. Little son darling, fall at thy father's feet for the last time.

SON : (*Falling at the feet*) What shall I now do separated from my father ?

CHANDANA-DASA : My son, reside in a land to which Chanakya has no access.

CHANDALA : Chandana-dasa, sir, the stake is erected ; so be prepared.

WIFE : Gentle folks ! Help ! Help !

CHANDANA-DASA : Good lady ! Why, what is this you are crying for ? The gods have mercy on the bereaved families of those who have gone to heaven. Further, in the cause of our colleagues I suffer death and not for any unworthy act. Then why should one weep even on an occasion for rejoicing ?

FIRST CHANDALA : O Bilvapatra ! take hold of Chandana-dasa. The members of the family will depart of their own accord.

SECOND CHANDALA : O Vajraloman ! I shall hold him.

CHANDANA-DASA : Good fellow, wait a moment while I console the little son. (*Hugging and kissing<sup>6</sup> him softly on the forehead*) Darling, inevitable is death at some time in the future. I am privileged to die for fulfilling the obligations to my colleagues.

SON : Father, need this be explained ? To be sure, for us this is an obligation imposed by good breeding. (*Falls at his feet*)

CHANDALA : O seize him !

(*The executioners seize Chandana-dasa*)

WIFE : (*Beating the breasts<sup>7</sup>*) Help ! Help !

(*Enters Rakshasa sweeping aside the curtain*)

RAKSHASA : Gentle lady ! Fear not. Executioners ! It is surely not Chandana-dasa who deserves to be executed.

He who formerly beheld the loss of his master's race,

As if it were that of a hostile clan,  
Whilst his friends were with anguish wrung,  
Who, at ease, remained as if at a festival ;  
He who holds his own life dear, though made  
The target of ignominy, is the person proper  
For you to slay—I am that person ;  
Pray tie round me the victim's wreath,  
The insignia of the realm of Death. [4]

CHANDANA-DASA : (*Seeing him ; with eyes misty*)  
Minister, what is this ?

RAKSHASA : This is merely to emulate, in part,  
your own noble conduct.

CHANDANA-DASA : Minister, what is this you propose to do which would only render all our strenuous endeavours infructuous ?

RAKSHASA : Friend, I am merely serving my own ends. Do not reproach. (*To the Executioners*) Gentleface, report to the evil-minded Chanakya.

VAJRALOMAN : What !

RAKSHASA :

Even in the evil age of Kali,  
When moral standards have declined,  
He guards others by his life,  
And by his conduct glorious,  
Has by far lowered Ushinara's<sup>s</sup> fame ;  
By this man, pure of soul, are surpassed  
In righteousness the very acts of the  
Buddhas.

Here I am present before you, for whose sake  
He who is worthy of worshipful admiration,  
Nevertheless has incurred your enmity. [5]

FIRST EXECUTIONER : O Bilvapatraka ! Take thou Chandana-dasa and stay awhile in the shade of the tree in the funeral ground ; meanwhile I shall report to Chanakya that the minister Rakshasa has been arrested.

SECOND EXECUTIONER : Go, O Vajraloman !

(*So goes out Chandana-dasa accompanied by the wife and son*)

FIRST EXECUTIONER : Please come along, minister. (*Walking along with Rakshasa*) Is there anyone here who would report to the honourable Chanakya, founder of the House of Maurya, who has reduced the Nanda dynasty to atoms—

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) This, too, one has to hear !

CHANDALA : —that the minister Rakshasa, the flow of whose intellect is restricted by his honour's diplomacy, has been taken prisoner.

SCENE II

The Royal Palace.

*(Then is discovered Chanakya, his body hidden behind the curtain,<sup>9</sup> only the face being visible)*

CHANAKYA : Good fellow, say—

Who in the hem of his garment, has wrapt  
fire

Glowing red with its leaping girdle of  
flames ;

Who has the ever wandering wind  
Reduced to sudden quiescence ;

Who led the lion, with his mane perfumed  
By odour of rutting elephants, to the cage ;  
Swarming with marine monsters innumer-  
able,

By whom, with his two arms, was  
Crossed the mighty main ? [6]

CHANDALA : With diplomatic skill and foresight  
by your honour.

CHANAKYA : Nay, not so. Say, rather by Pro-  
vidence hostile to the House of Nanda.

RAKSHASA : *(To himself)* This is the evil-minded,<sup>10</sup>  
or rather I should say the high-minded,<sup>11</sup> Kau-  
tilya !

Of all sciences he is the mine<sup>12</sup>  
As the sea is of pearls ;  
We are not content with his merits  
Which our envy denies. [7]

CHANAKYA : (*Looking closely ; exultantly, to himself*)  
Oh ! this is the minister Rakshasa ! It was on  
account of this man of mighty soul that,

With the heavy burden of anxious planning,  
And by reason of vigils prolonged,  
Vrishala's army and my mind as well,  
Under stress and strain,  
Have long been weary. [8]

(*Sweeping aside the curtain by the hand and advancing*)

Minister Rakshasa ! I, Vishnu-gupta, salute  
you.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) The epithet minister is  
now a mockery. (*Aloud*) Vishnu-gupta, you  
should not touch me polluted<sup>13</sup> by contact with  
the Chandalas.

CHANAKYA : O minister Rakshasa ! This is not  
a Shvapaka. This one, whom surely you have  
already seen, is an official in the king's service  
named Siddharthaka. And the other, Samid-  
dharthaka by name, is also a servant of the  
king. Further, the innocent Shakata-dasa was  
made to write by me, quite unwittingly, that  
sort of letter for use as a document for decep-  
tion.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) Fortunately, the suspicion  
about Shakata-dasa has been removed.

CHANAKYA : Need anything more be said ! Briefly,  
I might mention—

Our officers are Bhadrabhata and the rest,  
The letter so written, and Siddharthaka,  
Also the set of three ornaments,  
And your reputed friend the monk,  
So, too, the man who went to the ruined  
garden,

And the perils of the provost ;  
 All this, O gallant one ! were the expedients  
 Of Vrishala, anxious for collaboration<sup>14</sup>  
 with you. [9]

So, here is Vrishala desirous to meet you.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) What other course is there ? I must see him.

(*Then enter the king and his retinue according to rank and dignity*)

KING : (*To himself*) I feel abashed that even without a fight the enemy host, difficult to vanquish, should have been conquered by the Arya.

The fruit of sharp encounter,  
 Through Fate's decree, the arrows missed,  
 They feel this as a loss of feathers ;  
 Sadly the shafts lie, face downwards,  
 In the quivers ungratified. [10]

Or perhaps,

Though the bow be unstrung,  
 One is surely capable of conquering  
 All that may be worth the conquest,  
 Despite being dormant like me,  
 Provided one's elders are awake,  
 And vigilantly watch the administration  
 Of the affairs of state.<sup>15</sup> [11]

(*Approaching Chanakya*) Noble sir, Chandragupta bows.

CHANAKYA : All blessings have been fulfilled in your case. So salute his honour the minister Rakshasa. He is your hereditary Prime<sup>16</sup> Minister.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) He has tacked on the relationship !



KING: (*Approaching Rakshasa*) Noble sir, Chandragupta bows.

RAKSHASA: (*Gazing; to himself*) Oh! This is Chandragupta who—

When a mere infant his rise was foreseen  
To high estate in this world;<sup>17</sup>  
In due course to kingship he ascends,  
Like the elephant to the lordship of the  
herd. [12]

(*Aloud*) O King! may you be triumphant.

KING: Noble sir,

What is it that has not been conquered  
By me, in this world, so one may  
Well speculate;  
Whilst, in policy<sup>18</sup> like Brihaspati, is solici-  
tous the Preceptor,  
And your honour stands by alert. [13]

RAKSHASA: (*To himself*) Kautilya's disciple affects to treat me in the light of a servant! Or, perhaps, this is good manners on the part of Chandragupta while I, through animosity, imagine the contrary. Altogether, Chanakya has achieved success in the interest of a worthy person.

Since,

A leader, though dull-witted,  
Having access to a king ambitious of  
conquests,<sup>19</sup>  
Attains inevitably to a place of glory and  
prestige;  
Siding with an unworthy king,  
Even a minister with a political career  
Unblemished on earth,  
Falls, when the support is shattered,  
In the manner of the tree  
Growing on the river-bank. [14]

CHANAKYA : Minister Rakshasa, is it your wish that Chandana-dasa should live ?

RAKSHASA : O Vishnu-gupta ! wherefore can there be any doubt ?

CHANAKYA : Minister Rakshasa, without accepting the sword of office your honour has conferred a favour on Vrishala and therefore the doubt. So, if the desire for the life of Chandana-dasa is genuine, then be pleased to accept this sword.

RAKSHASA : Nay, Vishnu-gupta, not so. I am unworthy of it ; especially when it has been held by you.

CHANAKYA : Rakshasa ! I am incompetent ; you are worthy and the like—why need this be said ?

Look !

Together with the emaciated chargers whose  
saddles,

From riders plying whip and curb un-  
ceasingly,

Have never been free ;

Behold the war-elephants ! of bath, food,  
drink,

Recreation, and restful sleep deprived,  
And of like amenities indulged by them at  
will,

With their backs chafed by weight

Incessant of caparisons and trappings ;<sup>20</sup>

This was due to the mighty force, O wise  
one !

Of your manly endeavour ; for you could  
strike at the overweening pride of your  
haughty foe. [15]

But, to be brief, not unless your honour accepts the sword of office will the life of Chandana-dasa be guaranteed.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*)

My heart is touched by virtue  
Of affection for the Nandas,  
Yet I must be the servant of their enemy ;  
The very plants I tenderly sprinkled  
And helped to grow must be axed by me ;  
To preserve the body of my friend,  
It is incumbent that I should  
The sword of state accept.  
The course of world events, since long,  
Is not amenable to orders,  
Even of Providence. [16]

(*Aloud*) I bow to the love of a friend which is the determining factor in my action. There is no alternative. I am prepared.

CHANAKYA : (*Jubilant*) Vrishala, the minister Rakshasa has just conferred a favour on you. Congratulations to you !

KING : Chandragupta appreciates this as your honour's favour.

(*Entering*)

OFFICER : Victory to his majesty! Noble sir, here is Malayaketu, held under restraint by Bhadrabhata and others, arrived on the floor of the vestibule. Your honour, after hearing this, may decide as you please.

CHANAKYA : Good fellow, report to the minister Rakshasa. Now it is he who should know.

RAKSHASA : (*To himself*) After reducing me to servitude Kautilya now makes me voice a humble request! What other course is there ? (*Aloud*) King Chandragupta, it is wellknown that for sometime I dwelt at the court of Malayaketu ; may you, therefore, graciously spare his life.

(*The king looks at the face of Chanakya*)

CHANAKYA : The first overture of the minister Rakshasa deserves to be honoured. (*To the Officer*) Goodman, say to Bhadrabhata and the rest thus—"As humbly advised by the minister Rakshasa, his majesty Chandragupta has granted to Malayaketu his patrimonial territory ; so you gentlemen may accompany him. After he has been installed you should return."

OFFICER : As your honour directs. (*Moves away*)

CHANAKYA : Goodman, wait awhile. Also, inform the Minister for Defence<sup>21</sup> : "Chandragupta, highly gratified that the minister Rakshasa has been won over, commands that the provost Chandana-dasa should be raised to the dignity of provost of all the cities<sup>22</sup> in the empire. And furthermore, he should set at liberty every one barring the elephants and horses." Since the minister Rakshasa is now the leader what is there further for me to accomplish anyway ?

Barring the horses and elephants  
Let there be general release from captivity ;<sup>23</sup>  
In fulfilment of the vow,  
The tresses of my hair  
Shall alone be bound by me. [17]

(*Braids his loose tresses of hair*)

OFFICER : If your honour orders. (*Goes out*)

CHANAKYA : O King Chandragupta ! O minister Rakshasa ! Please say what else can I do for the benefit of you both.

KING : Is there any benefit surpassing even this ?  
With Rakshasa friendship has been achieved,  
And we are installed as the sovereign ruler,  
While all the Nandas have been eradicated ;  
What benefit surpassing this  
Remains to be secured ? [18]

RAKSHASA : Nevertheless, let this word of Bharata prevail !

When the Self-originating One assumed  
 The Boar's<sup>24</sup> form, meet for the task of  
 preservation,  
 On his sharp tusks, the earth, mother of  
 living beings  
 In the deluge submerging, of yore had  
 found asylum ;  
 Harassed by the Mlecchas she now seeks  
 refuge  
 In the arms of the King his image ;  
 May this monarch Chandragupta,  
 Together with his officials and relatives  
 illustrious,  
 Long protect the land. [19]

*(All go out)*

END OF THE SEVENTH ACT

**Thus ends the play, The Signet Ring of Rakshasa,  
 composed by Vishakha-datta.**

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# A

## THE SANSKRIT DRAMA

The natural horizon of the European mind is that of the Mediterranean sea. A European is only vaguely aware that in Asia there were great poets before Homer, profound philosophers before Socrates, mighty and civilized empires before Cæsar and lofty religious teachers before Moses and Christ. Hitherto, in every country, it has been considered sufficient to assimilate the cultural atmosphere in which one is brought up, or to conform to traditions to which one belongs by birth. The European, accustomed to look for the origins of his ideas among the Mediterranean peoples, has been content to trace philosophy, the arts and sciences to Greece, to derive law and political organization from Rome and religion from Palestine. Thus in the last century some Western scholars believed that the growth and development of Indian literature, especially the drama and even the ancient epic, the Rāmāyana, could be traced to the cultural contacts of India with Greece. And since the knowledge of such contacts was then limited to the period of Alexander the Great, the raid of the Macedonian conqueror and his brief sojourn in the north-west of India of about nineteen months were considered the source of the culture and enlightenment of the Indians. This extreme view of Niese is not true in any sense and according to Vincent Smith is not supported by a single fact. As regards the form of the Sanskrit literary drama Weber and Windisch held that it was due to Greek influence while the contrary proposition is now maintained, following Sylvain Lévi and Macdonell, by most Western scholars.<sup>1</sup>

The excavations at Mohen-jo-daro in the Larkana district of Sindh, and at Harappa, situated between Multan and Lahore in the Panjab, reveal the remains of an ancient Indian civilization the age of which has been calculated by experts at 3250 B.C. According to Childe the area embraced by the Indus civilization must have been twice that of the old kingdom of Egypt and probably four times that of Sumer and Akkad.

<sup>1</sup> For Niese's view see V. Smith Early History of India 4th Ed. p. 118 note, Weber—History of Indian Literature (Trübner) p. 217; Windisch Der griechische Einfluss im indischen Drama, Berlin, 1882; M. Sylvain Lévi—Théâtre Indien, pp. 343-366.

He writes "The Indus civilization represents a very perfect adjustment of human life to a specific environment that can only have resulted from years of patient effort. And it has endured; it is already specifically Indian and forms the basis of modern Indian culture."<sup>2</sup> Among the finds at Mohen-jodaro is a lovely figurine of a Dancing Girl. Later in the Rig Veda<sup>3</sup> we find much interesting data regarding dramatic performances. According to Prof. Keith "The Vedic ritual contained in itself the germs of drama," and in the Vedic ceremonies "there was undoubtedly present the elements of dramatic representation."<sup>4</sup> Both men and women in the Vedic period enjoyed dancing to the accompaniment of music and the tambourine (Āghāti).<sup>5</sup> The dialogues of Yama and Yamī, and of Purūravas and Urvashī, in the Rig Veda are essentially dramatic. From the latter Kālidāsa derived the inspiration for one of his famous plays. In the ancient epic, Rāmāyana, the actor (Nāṭa), the dancer (Nartaka), and plays in mixed languages (Vyāmishraka) are mentioned. In Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya there is evidence of a drama having been acted in a theatre. We find mention of the apparently long established professions of actors (Kusīlava) and dancers in the Artha Śāstra<sup>6</sup> attributed to Chāṇakya. According to Indian tradition Chāṇakya was the preceptor of the King Chandragupta Maurya and the Signet Ring is based on this tradition. We know that Chandragupta was a contemporary of Alexander the Great. At the turn of this century the lost plays of Bhāsa were discovered in South India where valuable Sanskrit manuscripts have mostly been found. The learned scholar Haraprasada Shastri placed the dramatist Bhāsa in the fifth century B.C. for in each of Bhāsa's plays the reigning monarch referred to in the epilogue is a king of the Nanda dynasty.<sup>7</sup>

With fuller knowledge of the history of ancient Greece and India there is now a swing of the pendulum. Tarn writes "Considered broadly, what the Asiatic took from the Greek was usually externals only, matters of form; he rarely took substance—civic institutions may be an exception—and never spirit. For in matters of the spirit Asia was quite confident

India's contribution to world culture.

<sup>2</sup> New Light on the Most Ancient East (1934) pp. 200 and 220.

<sup>3</sup> About 2500 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> The Sanskrit Drama, in its Origin, Development, Theory and Practice by A. B. Keith, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Rig Veda, X, 146, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Artha Śāstra Bk. I ch. 12; H. P. Shastri Bhāsa's Plays p. 54n.

<sup>7</sup> H. P. Shastri—Bhāsa's Plays.

that she could outstay the Greeks and she did." "Indian civilization was strong enough to hold its own against Greek civilization, but except in the religious sphere, was seemingly not strong enough to influence it as Babylonia did, nevertheless we may find reason for thinking that in certain respects India was the dominant partner." "Except for the Buddha statue the history of India would in all essentials have been precisely what it has been, had the Greeks never existed."<sup>8</sup> European scholars are at last waking up to the sense that they inherit a small peninsula on the western edge of Asia and that they have already, without knowing it, been largely thinking Asiatic thoughts. Indeed some modern scholars believe that the mental atmosphere in which they and their posterity must live will be diffused more and more by Asiatic minds dead and living. "It is true" says Will Durant, "that even across the Himalayan barrier India has sent to us such questionable gifts as grammar and logic, philosophy and fables, hypnotism and chess, and above all our numerals and our decimal system. But these are not the essence of her spirit; they are trifles compared to what we may learn from her in the future. As invention, industry, and trade bind the continents together, or as they fling us into conflict with Asia, we shall study its civilization more closely, and shall absorb, even in enmity, some of its ways and thoughts. Perhaps in return for conquest, arrogance and spoliation, India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of the mature mind, the quiet content of the unacquisitive soul, the calm of the understanding spirit and a unifying, pacifying love for all living things."<sup>9</sup> This is a reiteration of the earlier view of Max Muller who wrote: "If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may demand that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India."

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<sup>8</sup> The Greeks in Bactria and India (1938) pp. 67, 375-6, 376.

<sup>9</sup> The Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage (1935) p. 633.



In the opinion of some Western scholars the Sanskrit plays were intended to be read and were not meant to be acted. The structure and form of the play and the stage directions should suffice to prove that this view is untenable. A study of the *Sāhitya-darpana* which deals with the art of the drama and of *Nāṭya-śāstra*, the science of theatrical representation, of Bharata, together with the commentary on it of Abhinavagupta, should dispel doubts on the subject. Bharata deals exhaustively with the art of dramatic representation in thirty-eight chapters and gives directions for the training of actors, dancers and singers. He also describes the arrangement of furniture and the scenes, the construction of the theatre and the plan of the auditorium.<sup>10</sup>

Recently several Sanskrit works dealing with theatrical representations and music have been studied. The *Bhāva-prakāśana*<sup>11</sup> describes different types of theatres and the kind of plays which may be acted in them. The *Samgīta-Makaranda*<sup>12</sup> describes the stage and the auditorium, the places reserved for the king and his court and for the general public. The *Samgīta-Ratnākara* describes in still greater detail how the audience should be accommodated with seats to listen to a musical performance.<sup>13</sup> The researches of Bloch and Lüders show that the famous cathedral caves of India were used for holding theatrical performances.<sup>14</sup> A well-known verse of Bhartruhari compares human existence to the actor's life on the stage, while the oblivion of death is compared to the actor's final disappearance behind the curtain. It reads like the Sanskrit rendering of the following lines in *Macbeth* :

"Life's but a walking shadow ; a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more . . ."

In the prologue to *Śakuntala* the Stage-director is anxious that each actor should learn his part thoroughly. The references in old Indian literature are too many to admit of any doubt that the plays were acted. "A play is no book—the words do not live, until they are spoken."

<sup>10</sup> Bharata-Nāṭya-Śāstra, Ed. Joan Grosset, Paris, 1898, Chap. XIV, 4-8.

<sup>11</sup> Chap. X, 5-18.

<sup>12</sup> Chap. V, 2-9.

<sup>13</sup> Chap. VII, 1351-1361.

<sup>14</sup> Lüders—Indian Caves as pleasure Resorts, Indian Antiquary XXXIV pp. 199-200.

Although we may be sure that the ancient Indians developed a national theatre of their own it is not unlikely that during the Maurya period when they were in close contact with the Greeks they were influenced by Greek ideas. During the Gupta period one of the imperial cities was Ujjayini, the celebrated astronomical observatory of India, which was linked with Alexandria in Egypt through the port of Barygaza.<sup>15</sup> The bazaars of Barygaza and other ports on the south-west coast, for many centuries, abounded in luxury goods, strange beverages, and curious trinkets from foreign countries including Greece and Rome. Among the imports of Barygaza Periplus mentions singing boys and pretty maidens; and Tamil poets refer to "the cool and fragrant wine brought by the Yavanas in their good ships." Greek women Yavani, figure in the Sanskrit drama as Maids-in-waiting at the courts of Indian princes. They were no doubt acquired for their charm, intelligence and accomplishments and they must have brought with them the knowledge of the arts of their country. Great periods of human history are marked by a widespread access of vitality derived from the fusion of national culture with foreign influences. There is little doubt that the Gupta age was one such remarkable period in Indian history when the Indian theatre was greatly developed and flourished.

Sanskrit plays have been found in manuscripts in different parts of India as well as abroad. In 1890 a Sanskrit manuscript was found near Kucha, in Central Asia in a Stupa, and sold to Colonel Bower. The Bower manuscript, a work on medicine, is now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. It belongs to the second half of the fourth century and is written in the Gupta characters in Sanskrit. The German Archaeological Mission in Central Asia discovered still earlier manuscripts including the plays of the celebrated Asva-ghosha of which no copy was extant in India. The researches of Sylvain Lévi and M. Pelliot have revealed the extent of Sanskrit learning and Indian culture in Central Asia. The unifying force of this language was realized by Monier Williams who wrote—"India, though it has more than five hundred spoken dialects has only one sacred language, and only one sacred literature, accepted and revered by all adherents of Hinduism alike, however diverse in race, dialect, rank and creed. That language is Sanskrit and that literature is Sanskrit literature the only repository of the Veda or

<sup>15</sup> Sk. Bharu-Kaccha, modern Gujerati-Bhadoch; English-Broach.

'knowledge' in its widest sense; the only vehicle of Hindu theology, philosophy, law and mythology; the only mirror in which all the creeds, opinions, customs and usages of the Hindus are faithfully reflected; and (if we may be allowed a fourth metaphor) the only quarry whence the requisite materials may be obtained for improving the vernaculars or for expressing important religious and scientific ideas."<sup>16</sup>

The truth of the above observation of the last century is borne out by the rapid developments in the principal provincial languages in recent times in India especially in the field of modern technical and scientific terminology. In neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Ceylon and as far as Thailand (Siam) the growing linguistic requirements of a modern state and its administration are being met from Sanskrit, the language of their common culture. It is their only source of the necessary vocabulary for scientific research and modern invention. While presiding at the ninth Oriental Conference in 1937 at Trivandrum Dr. F. F. Thomas emphasized the unifying force of Sanskrit and confirmed the opinion of Max Müller who wrote "Such is the marvellous continuity between the past and the present in India, that in spite of repeated social convulsions, religious reforms, and foreign invasions, Sanskrit may be said to be still the only language spoken over the whole extent of that vast country . . . Even at the present moment, after a century of English rule and English teaching, I believe that Sanskrit is more widely understood in India than Latin was in Europe at the time of Dante."

In the notes to the Signet Ring reference has been made to words from the Rig Veda in order to illustrate the continuity of the literary language of India which is amazing. "The Rig Vedic Sanskrit shows no trace of a growing language. Its entire grammatical mechanism is perfected; every tense, mood, every number and person of the verb, is fixed, and all the terminations of the cases are firmly established, pointing to the later and more advanced inflectional stage in the life-history of a language. As remarked by Bunson "even these earliest specimens of Vedic poetry belong to the modern history of the human race." Centuries after the Rig-Vedic age comes Pāṇini who fixed the Sanskrit language as we now know it. If Pāṇini lived, as Prof. Goldstücker thought, in the 7th century B.C. the Sanskrit grammar compiled by him is about 2500 years old.

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<sup>16</sup> Hinduism, p. 13.

He cites earlier grammarians but his own great work has become immortal. And his people, who have been blamed for not keeping accurate records of kings and their dynastic and other wars, have through the centuries gratefully and unceasingly rendered homage to the memory of the great scholar "to the celebrated Pāṇini, by whom grammar was compiled we make obeisance."<sup>17</sup>

Accurate speech has ever been greatly esteemed among  
 Grammar. Indians. Somadeva, the Kashmiri author of the *Kathāsarit-sāgara*, relates the story of a king who, through ignorance of the phonetic rules of Sanskrit grammar, misunderstood a remark made by his wife and, overcome with shame, determined to become a good Sanskrit scholar or die in the attempt. In the eleventh century the Muslim historian and scholar, Alberuni, wrote "The two sciences of grammar and metrics are auxiliary to the other sciences. Of the two the former holds the first place in their estimation, called *Vyakarana*, i.e., the law of the correctness of their speech and etymological rules, by means of which they acquire an eloquent and classical style both in writing and reading." After giving a list of eight works on grammar including Pāṇini he tells the following story about *Ugrabhūti* :—

"I have been told that the last mentioned author was the teacher and instructor of Shah Anandapala, the son of Jayapala, who ruled in our time. After having composed his book he sent it to Kashmir, but the people there did not adopt it, being in such things haughtily conservative. Now he complained of this to the Shah, and the Shah, in accordance with the duty of a pupil towards his master, promised him to make him attain his wish. So, he gave orders to send 200,000 dirhams and presents of a similar value to Kashmir, to be distributed among those who studied the book of his master. The consequence was that they all rushed upon the book, and would not copy any other grammar but this one, showing themselves in the baseness of their avarice. The book became the fashion and highly prized."<sup>18</sup> The Kashmiri poet Bilhana, who resided at the court of Kalyāṇa, in the eleventh century wrote a poem on the life of his royal patron Vikramāṅka-deva. In the last canto of this poem he describes his alpine homeland and praises the women of Kashmir for their command over Sanskrit. Kshemendra (990-1065 A. C.), the Voltaire of Kashmir, was a lover and patron of the stage and a frequent play-goer. In his

<sup>17</sup> *yona vyākaraṇam proktam tasmai Pāṇinaye namaḥ.*

<sup>18</sup> Alberuni-India, Vol. I, pp. 135-6.

work the Kavi-Kaṇṭhābharāṇa he advises aspirants to poetic fame to improve their taste by the study of current theatrical representations. Kashmir was then the refuge of the Indian theatre after it had declined in the plains of India. Prof. Keith referring to the work of Kshemendra adds "doubtless the Mahomadan conquest seriously affected the vogue of the drama which was obnoxious to the new rulers as being closely identified both with the national religion and the national spirit of India. The kings who had been the main support of the actors and poets alike, disappeared from their thrones or suffered reverses in fortune. The tradition of dramatic performances gradually vanished."<sup>19</sup>

The script in which the plays are written, now called Nāgarī, is derived from the ancient Brahmi. The script. Prof. Macdonell calls it "the true national writing of India, because all later Indian alphabets are descended from it, however dissimilar many of them may appear at the present day." According to Dr. Georg Bühler the ancient Indian script known as Brahmi was derived from the oldest northern Semitic or Phoenician type and was probably introduced into India by Mesopotamian traders about 800 B.C. This view can no longer be accepted. Dr. Bühler was not able to explain how the primitive twenty-two Semitic symbols were developed by learned Indians on phonetic principles into a complete alphabet of forty-six letters which is already used by Pāṇini in the seventh century B.C. Assuming the foreign origin of the Brahmi script it must have taken a long time to elaborate it and adapt it to the requirements of Sanskrit pronunciation and there can be no doubt that writing is much older than 800 B.C. in India. Professor Langdon's view is that the Brahmi characters are derived from the prehistoric symbols used on their seals by the people of the Indus Valley. "The Aryan Sanskritists gave values derived from their own language to these characters. In other words they know their ideographic meaning, translated them into Sanskrit, and derived the syllabic values from the Sanskrit words."<sup>20</sup> Paleographical research shows that besides the Brahmi script another script known as the Khāroshṭhī was used in the north-west of India and parts of the Panjāb upto Śākala (Sialkot) from the fourth century B.C. to the second century A.C. It was borrowed from the Aramaic type of Semitic writing in the fifth century B.C. as a consequence of Iranian rule in north-western India. Aśoka used this script for his inscriptions in north-west India.

<sup>19</sup> Sanskrit Drama, p. 371.

<sup>20</sup> Mookerji, Hindu Civilization, p. 38.

Buddhist manuscripts written in the Prākṛit language have been found in Khāroshthī in Central Asia. The Khāroshthī was written from right to left; while the Brahmi is written from left to right. Both the *dextrorsum* and the *sinistrorsum* alphabets have thus long been in use in India. The Iranian script, once again in common use in the same regions of India where formerly the Khāroshthī was prevalent, is derived from a common Arnaic ancestor. From the Brahmi is derived the modern Nāgarī or the literary script of India. About this national script Professor Macdonell writes, "This is the alphabet which is recognized in Pāṇini's great Sanskrit grammar and has remained unmodified ever since. It not only represents all the sounds of the Sanskrit language, but is arranged on a thoroughly scientific method, the simple vowels (short and long) coming first then the diphthongs and lastly the consonants in uniform groups, according to the organs of speech with which they are pronounced. Thus the dental consonants appear together as t, th, d, dh, n and the labials as p, ph, b, bh, m. We, Europeans on the other hand, 2500 years later, and in a scientific age, still employ an alphabet which is not only inadequate to represent all the sounds of our languages, but even preserve the random order in which vowels and consonants are jumbled up as they were in the Greek adaptation of the primitive Semitic arrangement."<sup>21</sup> The Nāgarī script is rapidly spreading in India with the growth of a common national language and the movement for the removal of illiteracy. It is already in use for typewriting and printing and a non-official committee has recently recommended changes to suit modern conditions.

The story of the river of the immortals descending to earth is related in the ninth chapter of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The sons of King Sagara were turned to ashes during an expedition for conquests. Bosched by prince Bhagīratha, descendant of Sagara, the celestial river agreed to go down to Pātālā (Hades) to revive the sons of Sagara. To preserve the earth from inundation Śiva, on Mount Kailāsa, became the breakwater. The mighty floods, however, disappeared in his matted hair until at the further prayers of Bhagīratha, Śiva released Gangā, when her pride had been sufficiently humbled, to flow down the slopes of the Himalayas. This legend has inspired, through the centuries, the poets and artists of India, and of countries as far distant as Cambodia. The legend of the beneficent waters

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<sup>21</sup> A History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 17.

of the Gangā is reproduced in frescoes; and wrought in stone is perpetuated in the magnificent sculptures of South India.

With the first verse of the Signet Ring may be compared the following stanza of the Kashmiri poet  
*Misc-en-scène.* Chandaka. Śiva, seated in evening prayer, is supposed by Pārvatī, his consort, to be paying court to Sandhyā, Lady of the Twilight. The questions of Guha, their little son, are translated in inverted commas :

Mātar ! Jiva ! Kim etad añjali-pute tātena gopāyyate.  
 Vatsa ! svādu phalam ; prayachhati na me, gatvā gṛhāṇa  
 svayam Mātraivam prahito Guhe Vighatayati ākrishya  
 Sandhyāñjalim Sambhor bhinnasamādhir uddharabhaso  
 hāsodgamah pātu vah.

"O Mother!" mayst thou live long! "What is it that Daddy guards in the hollow of his hands?" "Darling, it is a delicious fruit." "He won't give it to me." "Go and take it thyself." Thus, urged by the mother, Guha seizes and separates the hands, folded in adoration to the Lady of the Twilight, of Śiva who, angry at the interruption, bursts into laughter at sight of his son; may the laughter protect you.<sup>22</sup>

Indian mythology illustrates the struggle between the powers of darkness, the Titans (Asuras), and the shining ones (Devas), by many interesting episodes. In one of these Śiva destroys the three cities (Tri-pura) of the Asuras and is, therefore, known as the conqueror of Tripura.

The dance of Śiva represents five activities (Pancha Kṛitya), viz., destruction, deliverance, incarnation, creation and preservation. The scene of the dance is the cosmos which, in art, is represented by the enveloping aureole of fire. As Nāṭarāja, King of Dancers, Śiva is represented with four arms; in the two upper ones he holds the tambourine (Dhakkā) and the antelope (Mriga) the two lower ones represent the Mudrās, or gestures, of granting a favour (Varada-hasta) and freedom from peril (Abhaya-hasta). Śiva has a third eye in the middle of the forehead the flame from which reduced to ashes Kāma, the god of Love. This story is the theme of Kālidāsa's famous poem the Birth of the War-god (Kumāra-Sambhava). With the help of his ally Vasanta, god of Spring, Kāma disturbs Śiva's austerities by shooting at him with his flower arrows.

<sup>22</sup> Subhāshitāvali. 69.

Kāma's body perishes in the mighty flame from Śiva's third eye. The immortal god, however, survives as Ananga (Bodiless) and exists in the minds of all living beings. Thus awakened from meditation Śiva sees the fair Pārvati, Maid of the Mountain, and their offspring, Kumāra, the War-god, in due course, leads the Devas to crush the Asuras in the struggle for power.

Referring to the allegory of the dance of Śiva, M. Grousset writes, "On turning from Buddhist poetry and morality, so pure and gentle that the heart at once goes out to them, we are perhaps a little taken aback by this Hindu polytheism with its confused innumerable throng of contradictory forms. But in the philosophy of Śivaism its apparent fancifulness falls into some order and takes on a metaphysical significance which is, in its way, as noble and elevated as that of Buddhism itself, and perhaps even richer. It is a grand and profound doctrine, which will remind us of certain aspects of the theories of Nietzsche, for it, too, transcends both good and evil being higher than both, and going beyond both optimism and pessimism alike, it contains a pessimism that is in some sort heroic—for the god dances in cemeteries; but it contains an optimism as well, a pitiless and inhuman optimism—or super-human, if we prefer so to call it; for out of all this destruction is born and perpetuated a fearful joy, the joy of matter eternally renewed."

The language of the drama though conforming in general to the rules of grammar is not hide-bound. It is light and sonorous and follows the usage prevailing at the time when the play was written. The drama perpetuated and popularised Indian art and learning. Richard Wagner was surely nearer the truth of things when he claimed that drama was not only pre-eminently the art of the people, but a great civilizing and cultural factor in the life of a nation. Although the Sanskrit drama is no longer acted at the courts of Indian princes, it is still sometimes acted in schools and colleges and continues to be acted in South India which has kept alight the torch of learning. The traditions of the old drama survive in the modern theatre which, as in ancient times, draws its actors and actresses from all classes, without distinction of caste or creed, for the delectation and instruction of the general mass of the people.

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## PĀṬALIPUTRA

“The Indians,” writes Professor Macdonell, “are the only division of the Indo-European family which <sup>Its importance.</sup> has created a great national religion—Brahmanism—and a great world religion—Buddhism; while all the rest far from displaying originality in this sphere have long since adopted a foreign faith. The Indians, moreover, developed independently several systems of philosophy which bear evidence of high speculative powers.”<sup>1</sup> The hero of the philosophic dialogues of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Yāgnavalkya, was a native of Videha (North Bihar). It was Yāgnavalkya, who, centuries before Christ, laid down the basis of moral conduct as follows: “Therefore let no one do to others what he would not have done to himself.” (IV, 65). His important pre-Buddhist work (800-500 B.C.) contains evidence of the process of the blending of the Aryans and the non-Aryans in Eastern India. Here the Aryans shed their race superiority and evolved wider philosophies. Magadha (Bihar), in course of time, became the home of world-sized men who taught that a single race, country and organized Church were treacherous land marks. To the universities of Magadha, the celebrated Nālanda and others, flocked students from Tibet and Ceylon, from Afghanistan and China. Pāṭaliputra, the capital of Magadha, became the capital of united India. Under Chandra-gupta Maurya the needs of a vast empire led to the development of military science and of the art of government. Chāṇakya by his genius perfected a political philosophy which exercised the minds of statesmen and politicians for centuries. From Pāṭaliputra were sent Buddhist missions to distant Babylonia, Egypt, Cyrene and Epirus by the Maurya Emperor Aśoka, who also despatched missions to Ceylon and, it is said, to Burma and Siam and Central Asia. From Pāṭaliputra spread Jainism, the earliest pacific creed in the world, to all parts of India including Afghanistan. Under the Sunga dynasty Pāṭaliputra was the centre of the revival of Brahmanism and again under the Imperial Guptas it became the centre of the Vaiṣṇava faith which had absorbed the gentleness and beauty of Buddhism. Vaiṣṇavism, founded on love and charity to all mankind, resembles Christianity even more than Buddhism.

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<sup>1</sup> A History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 6.

In the last quarter of the 11th century, Somadeva the Kashmiri author translated, by command of Queen Sūryamatī, into Sanskrit, the ancient Pushto work, *Bṛihat-kathā* (Great stories), attributed to Guṇādhyā who probably lived in the first century A.C. Guṇādhyā's work composed about a thousand years earlier must have compared with the Mahābhārata as it is stated to have contained a hundred thousand Ślokas. Somadeva called his translation *Kathāsarit-sāgara*, the Ocean of the Rivers of Tales. One of these tales relates to the founding of the city of Pāṭaliputra. Briefly it is as follows:—One Putraka of Rājagriha, whose ancestors had come from the Himalayas, while passing through the Vindhya mountains met two sons of a giant who were engaged in a quarrel over the division of their patrimony. The dispute related principally to three magic articles, viz., a pair of slippers, a vase and a wand. The slippers conferred on the wearer the power to fly through the air to any desired place. The vase produced food, riches, or whatever else its possessor wished, and whatever was written with the wand was realized. Putraka became the arbitrator in the dispute. By stratagem he got hold of the magical objects and flew away with them. Equipped with these he was able to make love to the beautiful princess Pātali, daughter of Mahendra-Varman, the Rajah of Ākarshikā and succeeded in carrying her away. The lovers alighted on the banks of the Ganges where Putraka in compliance with the wishes of his sweetheart, built, by the miraculous power of the wand, a city which he called Pāṭaliputra after the name of the princess. Putraka was later reconciled to his father-in-law and eventually became a powerful monarch who ruled the country as far as the southern ocean.

A somewhat similar tale is related in the ancient Greek version which omits some of the miraculous details. According to the Greek account the founder of Pāṭaliputra was Heracles. He begot a daughter in India called Pandaia to whom he assigned the portion which lay southwards and extended to the sea.

Pātali is the name of the flower *Stereospermum Suaveolens*. In the Buddhist and Jaina records and in literature the city is also referred to as Kusuma-pura or its synonym Pushpa-pura—the city of flowers. All three names are used in the Signet Ring.

The supernatural origin ascribed to this historic city was probably due to its massive stone work and masonry which

are traditionally believed to be the work of giants in the case of old Indian cities. Pāṭaliputra is not mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa and is probably not older than Rome.

According to Buddhist traditions the village or town of Pāṭaliputra on the south bank of the Ganges was fortified by the Brahman minister of King Ajāta-śatru, who was a contemporary of the Blessed One. The Buddhists ascribe the founding of the city to Kālāśoka. In the Mahāvamsa, the Buddhist chronicle of Ceylon, it is mentioned that about forty years after the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha the grandson of Ajāta-śatru, King Munda, reigned at Pāṭaliputra. In the Anguttara there is a story, which finds confirmation in the Ceylon chronicle, relating to King Munda, who grieved excessively when his wife died and refused to allow the body to be removed until consoled by a Buddhist philosopher. There is little doubt that at this period Pāṭaliputra was the capital of Magadha (South Bihar). From the Vāyu Purāṇa and the Sutta Piṭaka we learn that Pāṭaliputra was the capital of a mighty empire of Udayana, grandson of King Ajāta-śatru. From Tibetan sources we gather that the Blessed One visited Pāṭaliputra in his 79th year, a few months before the Nirvāṇa. He is reported to have praised Vassākara, minister of King Ajāta-śatru on his foresight in improving so important a place and to have predicted its future greatness. Buddha-ghosha writes in his commentary that the Blessed One had predicted the destruction of Pāṭaliputra by fire, flood and feud. We may, therefore, take it that all three events had already occurred and caused havoc before the time of this learned commentator. Ashes and charred remains were found when Dr. Spooner excavated the Pillared Hall of the Maurya period. The danger from fire must have been ever present judging from the strict precautionary measures adopted in the Artha Śāstra Bk. II, Ch. 36. References in literature to the flooding of the city are given in Dikshitar's Mauryan Polity.

In the last quarter of the 4th century B.C. the city was the capital of the empire of the Nandas who had welded all the adjoining provinces into one mighty dominion. It was the report about the power of the Nanda, ruler of Eastern India, which disheartened and alarmed the soldiers of Alexander the Great who was thus compelled to abandon further plans of adventure and conquest. Chandragupta acquired the empire of the Nandas and it was to his court at Pāṭaliputra that the Greek King Seleucus Nikator sent his personal friend Megasthenes.

as his ambassador about 300 B.C. Megasthenes wrote a detailed account of India which unfortunately has come down to us only in fragments. He thus describes the imperial city: 'At the junction of this river (Ganges) with another is situated Palibothra a city of eighty stadia (9.2 miles) in length and fifteen (1.7 mile) in breadth. It is of the shape of a parallelogram and is girded with a wooden wall, pierced with loopholes for the discharge of arrows. It has a ditch in front for defence and for receiving the sewage of the city. This ditch which encompassed it all round is six hundred feet in breadth and thirty cubits in depth, and the wall is crowned with 570 towers and has four and sixty gates.'<sup>2</sup> The ancient city stood on the south bank of the Ganges at the confluence of the Ganges with a river called 'Erranoboas by the Greeks (Sk. Hiranyabāhū) or the Sona mentioned in the Signet Ring, now called the Sone river. In the middle of the second century B.C. Patañjali wrote that Pāṭaliputra was situated on the Sona river.<sup>3</sup>

Pāṭaliputra is a city of hallowed memories for both Buddhists and the Jainas. A great schism had  
 Jainas Council. occurred in the Jainas church and following it the old canon had fallen into oblivion. About 300 B.C. a council of the Jainas learned in the Scriptures was held at Pāṭaliputra to collect and revise the scriptures. The two principal sects among the Jainas, the Śvetāmbara (white-clad) and the Digambara (Sky-clad) date from this memorable council and continue to this date. The canon fixed at Pāṭaliputra is still followed by the former sect while the latter, to whom it was unacceptable, believe that it was compiled at a much later date by Jinachandra at Valabhi (modern Vala) in Kathiawad.

From the Buddhist records preserved in India and Ceylon we learn that it was at Pāṭaliputra that a grand  
 Buddhist Council. council of learned Buddhist scholars was held in the 18th year of the reign of the Emperor Aśoka, grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, when the latest book of the three Piṭakas, the Kathā-Vattu, was composed. A detailed account of the session of the council has fortunately been preserved. Pāṭaliputra was then the capital of a mighty empire which included Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Seistan and practically the whole of India. H. G. Wells writes of Aśoka "Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majestics

<sup>2</sup> Arrian India p. 10; McCrindle p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> See Introductory Note p. XXIII.

and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Aśoka shines, and shines almost alone, like a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than have ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne."<sup>4</sup> Aśoka was one of the most lavish devotees. From the north-west of Afghanistan, Bamiyan and Kabul to Mysore, from Nepal to Kathiawad he covered his vast empire with stately monuments. His stupendous Stūpas and mounds of solid masonry, to enshrine the relics of the Blessed One, are almost of the size of Egyptian pyramids and mark some sacred spot all over India. His artistic instincts found play in the colossal Edict Pillars, single shafts of stone, thirty to forty feet in length and beautifully polished and sculptured, which excite the wonder of all who see them. The capital city, Pāṭaliputra, is mentioned by Aśoka in his Rock Edict V and in the Sāranātha Edict.

Upon the decline of the Maurya power the last King Brihadratha Maurya, was slain by his commander-in-chief Pushya-mitra who usurped the throne and founded the Sunga dynasty. According to K. P. Jayaswal the Sungas were high class Brahmanas who followed the Sāma Veda which especially deals with animal sacrifices. Pushya-mitra led the reaction against Buddhism. The later Mauryas were weak and degenerate and in the interests of the empire and of national freedom, threatened by the Bactrian Greeks, he removed Brihadratha as the Maurya had replaced the Nanda at the time of Alexander. King Menander of Kabul and Panjāb, desirous of emulating the military exploits of Alexander the Great, advanced with a formidable army and occupied parts of Sindh, Rajputana and Kathiawad after capturing Mathurā. He invested Ayodhyā and marched against Pāṭaliputra. The invasion was repelled by the forces of Pushya-mitra and according to Vincent Smith "Thus ended the second and last attempt by a European general to conquer India by land." The late Rakhaldas Banerji put the date of Pushya-mitra at about 158 B.C. and Menander's invasion tentatively in 163 B.C.

Pushya-mitra celebrated the national victory by holding a Horse-sacrifice (Aśva-Medha) as paramount Pushya-mitra. sovereign of North India. The defeat of the Yavana invaders and the celebration of the Horse-sacrifice are referred to in Kālidāsa's play *Mālavikā*

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<sup>4</sup> The Outline of History.

and Agnimitra. The historical tradition preserved in this play has been found to be accurate by epigraphical evidence and is confirmed by archaeological research. The play was translated into German by Weber in 1856, by Tawney into English in 1875 and twice into French, first by Foucaux and later by Victor Henry (Paris 1877, 1889). Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar rightly observed: "used with discrimination and judgment, literature, even general literature, may prove to be of as great value as any other source of history and sometimes infinitely more reliable and illuminating."<sup>5</sup>

Menander appears in Indian tradition as King Milinda who had become a convert to Buddhism. His dialogue with the celebrated Buddhist philosopher Nāgasena<sup>6</sup> is known as the *Milinda-Panho* or Questions of Milinda. The *Milinda-Panho* was originally written in old Pashto of which no copy is extant. It is, however, preserved in Ceylon, Burma and Siam in the Pāli recension. The earliest extant Pāli copy of the fourth century A.C. according to Sylvain Lévi, has been discovered in a Buddhist shrine in Japan. Buddha-ghosha repeatedly refers to this celebrated dialogue as an authoritative work though not in the canon. After his death Menander appears to have been treated with honour which recalls the passing of the Blessed One. According to Plutarch "When Menander, one of the Bactrian kings, died on a campaign after a mild rule, all the subject towns disputed about the honour of his burial, till at last his ashes were divided among them in equal parts."

Pāṭaliputra remained the capital of the Magadhan empire during the age of the Sungas and their successors. In the beginning of the 4th century A.C. a memorable event occurred. A Magadhan rajah married Kumāra Devī, a lady of the Lichhavi clan. This famous republican clan had already acquired a reputation in the pre-Buddhist period and its fame has been preserved in the Buddhist annals. Eight centuries after the Buddha the Lichhavi clan again acquired historic pre-eminence. The marriage alliance with Chandragupta helped to found the Gupta dynasty which rivalled the glory of the Mauryas. There are few instances of hereditary monarchy which bear comparison with the kings of the Imperial Gupta dynasty (320-

<sup>5</sup> Presidential Address at the First Bombay Historical Congress, 1931.

<sup>6</sup> Nāga-Sena (180-160 B.C.); for his famous dialogue, Questions of *Milinda*, see Vol. XXV, Sacred Books of the East; and Tarn, the Greeks in Bactria and India (1938) pp. 268-9, 386.

455 A.C.) Chandra-Gupta I, his son, Samudra Gupta, the Indian Napoleon, and grandson Chandra Gupta II, and Kumāra-Gupta I. Then followed Skanda-Gupta, Narasinha-Gupta and Kumāra-Gupta II and their successors who ruled over a reduced empire (455-606 A.C.). The earlier Guptas were men of extraordinary ability, skilled both in the arts of peace and war. Their efficiency was tempered by mildness. The Gupta tradition of enlightenment was continued by their successors; and in the seventh century the great Harsha Vardhana followed the noble example of Aśoka.

The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, Fa-hien, who travelled across Central Asia, through Afghanistan, to India toured for fifteen years (399-414 A.C.) in search of Buddhist scriptures in India. He spent three years in Pāṭaliputra copying rare scriptures which he had searched in vain in northern India. According to him the city was a large one with many of the buildings of the Emperor Aśoka in good preservation and he gives a glowing account of their marvellously "elegant carving and inlaid sculptural work." Two hundred years later when the famous Chinese pilgrim, Hsuan Tsang, Master of the Law, arrived at Pāṭaliputra, the condition of the city was deplorable. The learned pilgrim found the city and its magnificent monuments a mass of crumbling ruins and long deserted. He notes that the Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples and "Stupas which lie in ruins, may be counted in hundreds. There are only two or three remaining entire." This decline was no doubt partly the result of the havoc wrought by Hun invaders whose cruelty and vandalism in India rivalled their barbarities in Europe. From Hsuan Tsang we learn that about forty years before his arrival in Pāṭaliputra King Śaśāṅka of Central Bengal, an ardent devotee of Śiva, oppressed the Buddhists, cut the sacred Bodhi tree at Gayā and attempted to break the stone marked with the foot-print of the Blessed One at Pāṭaliputra and later King -Puruvarman of Magadha, a descendant of Aśoka, restored the sacred tree.

In the ninth century Pāṭaliputra was restored to prosperity and power under the Pāla King, Dharmapāla, who held his court there in 810 A.C. The third and most powerful king of the Pāla dynasty was Deva-pāla who was a zealous follower of Buddhism. Mahipāla I, the ninth Pāla King helped to revive Buddhism in Tibet. A stream of Indian scholars from the universities of Nālanda, Vikrama-śilā and Pāṭaliputra journeyed to the high altitudes and during the years 1013-1038 A.C. helped

to re-establish the gospel of the Buddha in Tibet on a firm foundation.

The traditions of the imperial city were so completely lost during the Middle Ages that the site of the ancient city was indicated in a general way by Major Rennell in 1783 in his *Memoir of a Map of Hindustan*. In 1808 Dr. Buchanan Hamilton in his survey of Patna recorded that according to the local priests in the city of Patna its ancient name was Pāṭaliputra. After the discovery in China of the works of Fa-hien and Hsuan Tsang which contain remarkably detailed and accurate accounts of the cities of India in the fifth and seventh centuries A.C. respectively a local survey of the topography of Patna was made. This revealed that the geographical details given by the Chinese pilgrims were correct and that the river Sone had formerly joined the Ganges at Patna. In 1878 General Cunningham, after collecting many old references to the ancient city and after visiting Patna, found that the site of the imperial city was to the south of the modern railway. Dr. Waddell<sup>7</sup> taking as his guide the itineraries of the Chinese pilgrims discovered the site of the ancient city and found that the principal monuments and palaces lay to the south of the city which itself fringed the right bank of the Ganges.

By the generosity of the late Sir Ratan Tata, Parsi merchant prince and philanthropist, who placed a sum of money at the disposal of the Archaeological Department of the Government of India, excavations were begun at the site—Kumrahar—indicated by Dr. Waddell. The official account of this work has been published in the Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India for 1912-1913. Dr. D. B. Spooner, who was entrusted with the work of excavation, discovered the Pillared Hall of the Maurya period the columns of which exceed twenty feet in height. He also found wooden structures of the Mauryas which have been graphically described by Megasthenes. Dr. Spooner writes that these were "in almost incredible state of preservation, the logs which formed it being as smooth and perfect as the day they were laid, more than two thousand years ago." South of the Pillared Hall Dr. Spooner found a series of seven wooden platforms. In view of the fact that both Megasthenes and the Artha Śāstra describe the wooden palisades and structures for defence, and the fact that Dr. Waddell found during partial excavations the original logs of

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<sup>7</sup> Excavations at Pāṭaliputra, 1903.



the ancient fortification *in situ*, it may be of interest to give an account of the platforms discovered by Dr. Spooner. "The neatness and accuracy with which it (platform) had been put together, as well as the marvellous preservation of the ancient wood, whose edges were so perfect that the very lines of jointure were indistinguishable, evoked the admiration of all who witnessed the experiment. The whole was built up with a precision and reasoned care that could not possibly be excelled today, and which I fancy is only rarely, if ever, equalled in India. The vertical piles of logs were most neatly stopped, each underlying log being advanced an inch or two beyond the one above it, and each horizontal layer was bound together by accurately dressed planks of wood on which the several logs of the layer were threaded. To ensure greater strength still, the outer log of the layer which rested on the ground was pegged down into the earth by upright pegs fully three feet in length; and the whole pile was again still further bound together by the upright posts along the sides, between which and the actual sides of the platform a certain amount of wooden packing appears to have been introduced for greater firmness. In short, the construction was the absolute perfection of such work, and those of us who had the privilege of observing it were taught a salutary lesson, in regard to the often boasted superiority of our own times. The builders who erected these platforms would find little indeed to learn in the field of their own art, could they return to earth today."<sup>8</sup>

On the columns of the Maurya palace were found certain symbols, being masons' marks, which according to Dr. Spooner, show that Persians and Medes were probably employed for the construction of the palace. Dr. Spooner based this conjecture on a comparison with similar marks at Behistun and Takht-i-Madar-i-Sulaiman given in Dieulafoy's work *L'art antique de la Perse*, which he found to be identical. Sir John Marshall was also of opinion, judging from the strong Persepolitan influences in the capital of Asokan columns, that the Maurya Emperors must have employed Graeco-Persian artists or artisans for their monuments. During the Maurya period Pataliputra must have been a magnificent city. Dr. Spooner writes "it was not without reason that the early Greek ambassadors compared the royal monuments of Pataliputra to those of Ecbatana and Susa."

Graeco-Iranian  
Influence.

<sup>8</sup> Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report 1912-13 pp. 72, 76.

## VIŚĀKHA-DATTA AND THE AGE OF THE GUPTAS

From the Prologue and Colophon of the Signet Ring we learn that the name of the author is Viśākha-datta. The Prologue also contains the names of his father and grandfather. These names are, however, not identical in all the manuscripts. If we accept the name of the father to be Bhāskara-datta and of the grandfather to be Vaṭeśvara-datta, as agreed by scholars, Indian and European, it would seem that the author belonged to a clan whose family name was Datta.

In the Bharata-Vākya, or Epilogue, of the Signet Ring the name of the reigning king, the author's contemporary, is mentioned. Here too, there are various readings. Eminent scholars are agreed that *pārthivas Chandraguptah*, King Chandra-Gupta, is probably the correct reading. If so, there is little difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that the king referred to is Chandra Gupta II, of the Imperial Gupta dynasty, known in literature and legend as Vikramāditya, the celebrated patron of learning and enemy of the Scythians (Śakāri).

This conclusion is strengthened by the recent discovery of a drama by Viśākha-datta, entitled Devī Chandragupta, of which the hero is undoubtedly Chandra-Gupta II. The upper limit of the date of Viśākha-datta can now be fixed with certainty since the incidents relating to the life of Chandra-Gupta II could only have been recorded by some one who was either the contemporary of that king or who lived after him.

The drama Devī Chandragupta is, unfortunately, found in fragments. The quotations from it, however, in the Śringāra-prakāśa of Bhoja, and the Nāṭya-darpaṇa of Rāmachandra and Guṇachandra, help us to reconstruct the plot of this lost play and its main background. In this task of reconstruction the literary research of Professor D. R. Bhandarkar and K. P. Jaysawal throws light.<sup>1</sup> The play deals with the extraordinary incidents of the rescue of the queen, Dhruva-devī, wife of King Rāma-Gupta who had been compelled to agree to hand her over for

<sup>1</sup> Bhandarkar : Malaviya Commemoration volume p. 189 ; Jaysawal : Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society. XVIII, 1932, p. 17.

ransom to the Scythian (Śaka) ruler of Giripura. Giripura is the modern Junagarh in Kathiawad.<sup>2</sup> The prince Chandra-Gupta, younger brother of Rāma-Gupta, unable to bear this disgrace endeavoured to induce Rāma-Gupta to let him personate the queen. Deeply attached to his younger brother the King was unable to accept the offer. The prince Chandra-Gupta, nevertheless, secretly executed his bold plan and entered the camp of the Scythian ruler in the guiso of the queen. After killing the enemy he escaped and rejoined the imperial army which he led in a successful attack on the enemy's stronghold situated in the foothill of the Girnar Mountain. Subsequently, Chandra-Gupta married the queen Dhruva-Devi.

Viśākha-datta has vividly depicted the three principal characters, viz., the King, the queen and the prince Chandra-Gupta, judging from the fragments so far available. Such a portrayal is the work of one who, seemingly, was present in the imperial camp and knew the persons concerned intimately or of an author whose task was to praise and, where necessary, to whitewash the conduct of the prince who later succeeded to the imperial throne. In either case it probably is the work of a contemporary of the King Chandra-Gupta II.

It is not unlikely that Viśākha-datta was not merely a contemporary but a relative of the King Chandra-Gupta II. Here, of course, we are entirely in the region of conjecture. It is noteworthy that the author's grandfather is mentioned in the Prologue to the Signet Ring as a *Sāmanta*, a feudatory chief; while his father is described as *Mahārāja* which is a much higher status. This sudden elevation in status in one generation indicates a marriage alliance with the imperial family.<sup>3</sup> From the Eran and Bhitarī inscriptions we know that Chandra-Gupta II was the son of the mighty King Samudra Gupta, by the queen Datta-devī. Datta-devī, or lady of the Datta clan, was probably the designation of the queen. The old custom of describing queens and princesses in this polite way still prevails among the ruling princes. That Viśākha-datta (the gift of Viśākha) was a Kshatriya (belonging to the martial class) may be presumed; for Viśākha means the god of war. The internal evidence of the Signet Ring and the fragments of the Devī-Chandragupta suggest that the author

<sup>2</sup> Junagadh was also called Girinagar, which survives in the name of the hill Girnar; Kathiawad is Surāshtra, known to the Greeks as Syrtstre.

<sup>3</sup> See Act III p. 54, for use of the term *Mahārāja*.

must have been intimately acquainted with court life, politics and the art of war. It is significant that in the Epilogue of the Signet Ring the author prays for the protection of the land by the reigning monarch "aided by his relatives and officers."

There can be no doubt that *Devī Chandragupta* is a historical play. To the incidents described in this play there is a laconic reference in the poem *Harsha-Charita* by Bāṇa in the seventh century. Vincent Smith, before the discovery of the lost play, wrote "Scandalous tradition affirmed that 'in his enemy's city, the King of the Śikas while courting another man's wife was butchered by Chandra-Gupta, concealed in his mistress's dress' but the tale does not look like genuine history,"<sup>4</sup> The incident is, however, more fully referred to in an inscription dated 871 A.C. The play *Devī-Chandragupta* thus throws fresh light on the history of Chandra-Gupta II and enables us to fix the date of *Viśākha-datta*, its author who is also the author of the *Signet Ring*, tentatively at 400 A.C.<sup>5</sup>

Professor Winternitz, one of those scholars who had favoured the view that *Viśākha-datta* belonged to the period of Chandra-Gupta II, was apparently inclined, after the discovery of the *Devī-Chandragupta*, to assign the date of the author to the sixth century A.C. According to him "it is not likely that *Viśākha-datta* would have written the *Devī Chandragupta*, a drama in which Chandra-Gupta marries the wife of his elder brother murdered by him, at the life time of the King, or even *Kumāra-Gupta*, the son of *Dhruva-devī*." Until, however, the full text is discovered we shall not know how the death of *Rāma-Gupta* is described in this play. And it cannot legitimately be presumed that the prince Chandra-Gupta murdered his brother in order to marry his widow or to usurp the throne. From the fragments of the play, we find that *Rāma-Gupta* is devoted to his younger brother who is described as a prince of noble instincts and honourable conduct. According to the rules of Sanskrit dramaturgy the hero should be *Dhīra-prasānta*, a man of resolute courage, poise and calm judgment. It is inconceivable that in the course of the play the author should relate that Chandra-Gupta returned the affection of his brother and sovereign by murdering him. The probability is that after the death of *Rāma-Gupta*, the widowed queen married the gallant prince who had saved her from

<sup>4</sup> *Early History of India*, 4th Ed. p. 309; the quotation is from *Harsha-Charita*, translated by Cowell and Thomas, p. 194.

<sup>5</sup> Prof. *Dhruva-Mudrā Rākshasa* 3rd Ed. p. XVI Tillebrandt, Speyer, Tawney, Konow, Telang, and Jayaswal place the *Signet Ring* at the end of the fourth century A. C.

ignominy. Remarriage with the deceased husband's younger brother was not only perfectly legal according to the ancient law books and works on Political Science,<sup>6</sup> it must, no doubt, have won the approbation of the vast mass of the people of the empire at the time. For the disastrous reverses, in the initial stage of the war with the Scythians, of the imperial forces of Pāṭaliputra operating in the extreme west in Kathiawad nearly two thousand miles away were retrieved by the gallant conduct of the prince who had chivalrously risked his own life to save the distressed queen as well as the honour of the imperial family. Until, however, the full text of the *Dvī-Chandragupta* is discovered judgment on the play and the thrilling incidents described in it must be suspended.

Viśākha-datta as a poet and dramatist is far inferior to Kālidāsa in whose hands classical Sanskrit, at its climax of perfection during the Gupta age, is the most flexible and sonorous of languages. It has been given to no other man to shape the language—the very fibre of a people—as Kālidāsa shaped the Sanskrit. By virtue of his mastership in many moods, his incomparable word-craft, his easy access to the deeper sources of emotion and the charm of his melodious lyrics he holds a unique place in Indian literature. Kālidāsa's style is difficult to qualify except in a simile. It may be said to resemble the drapery of a young Indian woman, faultless alike where it clothes, and where it reveals; better suited to dignified movement than to violent action, and perhaps most beautiful in complete repose.

In Viśākha-datta's lyrics there are no high flights and he holds his place among the greater singers with difficulty. A noticeable blemish of his verse is an occasional tautology. Nevertheless Viśākha-datta is an efficient organizer of dramatic action and incident. His characters are real men and women, the good are faulty, the bad are not without excuse and their acts are accounted for by adequate motives. He delights in conflict and is attracted by the ironies of fortune and his forensic dialogue is inspired by passion. His background are the sunlight, the broad rivers, the lordly war-elephant and the proud thorough-bred charger, the hills and the surface of the earth where the mighty, when at variance in the game of diplomacy, test their mettle in the clash of battle; he loves these conflicts, physical and moral, and of them he speaks with confident knowledge. Above all Viśākha-datta has left us

<sup>6</sup> *Artha Śāstra* Bk. III Ch. 4.

a penpicture of the immortal Chāṇakya who comes out from between the covers of a book and is made flesh for those who have the eyes to see and the mind to dream.

As a writer of a historical play Viśākha-datta has endeavoured to give a faithful picture of the bygone age of the Mauryas. Augury during the Maurya age must have exercised a great influence as among the contemporary Romans. Among the latter the signs of the will of the gods were eagerly scanned from the flight of birds, warnings of unusual phenomena, etc. Dr. Seyffert writes "No public act whether of peace or war could be undertaken without auspices. They were especially necessary at the election of all officials, the entry upon all offices, at all comitia and at the departure of a general for war." Wilson observes: "Great importance is attached to the fortuitous expressions of individuals throughout these dramas, and a prosperous and unprosperous result anticipated from the thoughts or the words, by the person to whom they are addressed. The Greek plays are full of similar instances, and they are sufficiently abundant in every other department of classical literature. Cicero cites very curious examples in his book *De Divinatione*. That related of Lucius Paulus is very analogous to the instance in the text. "Lucius Paulus the consul had been appointed to conduct the war against Perseus. On returning to his house in the evening he found his little daughter Tertia full of grief, and on asking her what was the matter, replied 'Persa (a puppy so named) is no more.' Taking her up in his arms, and kissing her, the consul exclaimed, 'I accept the omen,' and the event corresponded with the expression." The effect of the omen seems also with the Hindus, as well as the Greeks and Romans, to have depended in a great measure upon a person's applying it, and signifying his acceptance of it. The phrase addressed to Chāṇakya is a customary one for princes and ministers, *Jayatu āryah*, and it is rendered prophetic by Chāṇakya's assent, *Grihito yam jaya-sābdah*, "the word jaya (victory) is accepted," *Oionon dochesthai*, □ *Omen arripero*, and *Sābdam grihitam*, are terms of similar import in the three languages."<sup>7</sup> The flicker of the eyelid is still regarded as ominous. The number thirteen even in conjunction with a Friday means nothing to an Indian. He would not hesitate to walk under a ladder. Crossed knives, spilt salt, sailors drowning when glasses are made to ring, black coats, the new moon seen through glass, chimney sweeps and

<sup>7</sup> Theatre of the Hindus, Vol. II. p. 165n.

such like manifestations would leave him unmoved. But the flicker of the left eyelid is a different matter. It still makes him feel queer and superstitious !

There is a region beyond the physical and the intellectual which the ancient Indian poets utilized to express their dreams and aspirations ; this they entered when they framed their wonderful myths. Once upon a time after a prolonged war between the gods and the Titans the belligerents agreed, upon the advice of Vishṇu, to work together to churn the ocean of milk and to discover ambrosia (Amrita) the drink of immortality. The Great Powers uprooted Mount Mandāra and sank it into the depths of the ocean to serve as the dasher of the churn. As a support for Mount Mandāra, Vishṇu became a giant tortoise and kept it from submerging. The mighty serpent Vāsuki was passed round the mountain dasher to serve as a cord ; the gods at the tail end and the Titans at its head then commenced hauling, each team in rhythmic succession. Suddenly from the seething waves the terrible poison Hālāhala was thrown up capable of destroying the whole world including the gods, had not Śiva swallowed it in his infinite compassion for all living beings. Thereafter, *inter alia*, came up marvellous creatures such as the horse Uchhīśravas, with his moon-coloured coat, the lordly elephant Airāvata, the divine Apsarās (nymphs) and the lovely Lakshmi (Fortuna) who became the consort of Vishṇu. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa thus describes her. " Holding in her hand a lotus garland round which hummed the bees, she turned her gracious face made lovely by the smile of modesty, and against whose cheeks sparkled ear-rings ; her two breasts perfectly matched and close together, were covered with powdered sandal wood and saffron, her waist was so slight that it was scarcely visible ; her every step was accompanied by the tuneful jingle of the anklets which adorned her feet, and her whole body was like a golden liana." At last there arose from the waves a dark youth bearing a vase filled with ambrosia, the drought of immortality. At the banquet which followed the Titans, Rāhu and Ketu, began serving the ambrosia to the assembled gods. Rāhu, however, tempted to take a deep draught from the vase, was caught in the act by Śiva who cut off his head. The feast broke up and war was renewed which the gods, now become immortal, won. The immortal head of Rāhu, supported by Ketu, still pursues the moon, who is the abode of ambrosia. This is the legendary cause of the eclipse. Viśākha-datta has made use of this popular myth to give double

The churning  
of the ocean.

meanings to Ketu and Chandra in the Prologue as well as in Rākshasa's dialogue with the monk at the end of the fourth Act.

The Gupta Age is well known for its advance in the exact sciences, mathematics, and for discoveries in Astronomy. It is adorned by the illustrious names of the astronomers Āryabhata, Brahmagupta and Varāhamihira. Āryabhata was known to the Arabs as Arjehir and his works, the Siddhāntas, were translated and adopted by the Arabs under the title Sindhind; also the Arkand of Brahmagupta was translated into Arabic and was known as Ahargana. The Khalifs Mansur and Harun of Baghdad repeatedly summoned Indian astronomers to supervise their work. Al Fazari and other Arabian scholars translated the Brahma-siddhānta and Khandakhādīyak into Arabic with the help of Pandits. Colebrooke writes that "the Hindus had undoubtedly made some progress at an early period in the astronomy cultivated by them for the regulation of time. Their calendar, both civil and religious, was governed chiefly, not exclusively, by the moon and the sun; and the motions of these luminaries were carefully observed by them, and with such success, that their determination of the moon's synodical revolution, which was what they were principally concerned with, is a much more correct one than the Greeks ever achieved. They had a division of the ecliptic into twenty-seven and twenty-eight parts, suggested evidently by the moon's period in days, and seemingly their own; it was certainly borrowed by the Arabians." The Sūrya Siddhānta edited and translated by Whitney is a work which is not later than 300 A.C. According to Dr. Thibaut the Indian astronomical treatise entitled Romaka Siddhānta was written under Greek influence. It is older than Āryabhata and cannot be later than 400 A.C. Varāha-mihira was born near Ujjayinī (Ujjain), the Greenwich of India, and began his calculations about 506 A.C. According to one of his commentators he died in 587 A.C.

The author correctly describes the Maurya Age by laying stress on the force of elephants and horses referred to in the play as the very basis of the power and existence of the state. The Artha Śāstra devotes chapters to this subject, for elephants and cavalry were the most important part of the armed forces of the crown. The word for elephant is Hastin in the Rig Veda where it is described as "an animal with a hand." The word Hathī in the provincial languages is derived from Hastin through the Prakrit. The early Aryans were apparently awe-struck by this strange animal who

Elephants  
and lions.



used its trunk as hand. It had to function twice, they noted, to be able to drink; first to take up water with the trunk and then discharge it in the mouth. Hence the later Sanskrit word for an elephant is a multiple drinker *Dvipa*, *Anekapa* (Aet VII, st. 6). The lion was known to the Vedic poets who were greatly struck by its roar reverberating in hill and dale. In those days the lion must have been common in the regions of the Panjāb upto the Satlaj river. It is significant that while the tiger is a native of the Indian forests from the high altitudes of the Himalayas down to the southern ocean, and is found elsewhere in Asia, the lion has been confined to the west and north-west of India and now survives only in the semi-sanctuary of the Gir forest within the Junagarh State in Kathiawad. Thus the Gir forest is the last refuge of the lion which is extinct in Asia. Fights between the lion and other animals, including the elephant, were formerly considered a worthy sport to amuse ruling princes and until recently were held at Junagarh and Baroda. The elephant is now extinct in Kathiawad but in Chāṇakya's time *Surāshtra* (Kathiawad) is mentioned as the source of supply of elephants for the imperial army though they were inferior to the elephants of Kalinga (Orissa). The lion besides being the emblem of royal authority has been the symbol of resolute courage. The word *Simha* has, therefore, formed part of the names of the *Kshatriya* (warrior class) as well as martial clans such as the *Bhumihar Brahmins* of the United Provinces and other clans and sects. The originally peaceful sect of the Sikhs (Sk. *Śiṣya*: Disciple) were organised by their later Teachers into a Church Militant in consequence of the persecution of the Mughal administration in its decline. The Sikhs, too, adopted the word *Simha* as a part of their names together with militancy. While the Jainas, pacifists from ancient times, have also used *Simha* as part of their names to symbolize the courage of non-violence; for with them *Ahimsā* or non-violence has ever been the creed of the brave.

Viśākha-datta's use of the terms *Kshapanaka*, *Arhat*,  
 Srāvaka and Bhadanta shows that he was in  
 The Jainas. touch with the Jainas of his day at Pāṭaliputra.  
 In his day Ujjain in Malwa and Valabhi in Kathiawad were important centres of the Jainas. The earlier view was that Viśākha-datta's introduction of the Jainas in the Signet Ring which deals with the Maurya Age was an anachronism. Professor Mookerji referring to the traditional account of the Jainas relating to their influence over the Nandas, predecessors of the Mauryas, writes "The tradition of the Jainas about their influence on the Nandas is recognized in the later Sanskrit drama,

Mudrā Rakshasa, in which Chāṇakya selects a Jain as one of his chief agents. Jain influence is a factor in the social background of the drama."<sup>8</sup> Literary references to Chandragupta Maurya by the Digambara Jainas indicate a connection with Mysore in the last days of the emperor which, to some extent, is corroborated by the discovery of Mauryan antiquities, through the archaeological excavations, at Brahmagiri, one of the sites of Aśoka's Edicts in Mysore. Some scholars, including Vincent Smith, believed that Chandragupta became a convert to Jainism towards the end of his reign.

One of the most remarkable of the Upanishads is known as the Kāthaka. In it the problem of life after death is discussed which according to Max Muller, Yama legend. "forms one of the most beautiful chapters in the ancient literature of India." Nachiketas, a Brahmana youth, visits the realm of Yama who offers him the choice of three boons. Nachiketas chooses for the third the answer to the question whether or not man exists after death. Death replies "Even the gods have doubted this; it is a subtle point, choose another boon." Nachiketas, however, holds fast to the question. Yama offers him riches and earthly power, and after other vain attempts to evade the question eventually yields to the persistence of Nachiketas and reveals the secret. Life and death, he explains, are only phases of development. True knowledge which consists in recognizing the identity of the individual soul with the world soul, raises its possessor beyond the reach of death. When every passion that nestles in the human heart is abolished then man gains immortality: *yadā sarve pramuchyante kāmā ye asya hṛdi sthitāḥ*. (Kāth. Upan. VI 14.) According to Sir R. G. Bhandarkar: "This appears to be adopted or appropriated by Buddhism and one sense of the name Māra, of the Buddhist Prince of Darkness, is Kāma or Desire. Of the four noble truths of Buddhism the first is misery (Dukkha) and the second the origin of misery. This is thirst or desire. If, therefore, the misery of worldly existence is due to desire, the conclusion follows, that in the words of the Kāthā Upanishad by uprooting your desire you are free from misery and attain immortality and eternal bliss."<sup>9</sup> In Act III st. 16 the Chamberlain pays a high tribute to Chāṇakya by describing him as a Nirāha: one who is free from desire.

<sup>8</sup> Mookerji: Hindu Civilization p. 277. Chāṇakya employed Induśarmā, his personal friend, as a spy—in the guise of a Jain monk. Act I p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> A Peep into the Early History of India, p. 7.

The terms *Kāla-pāśa* and *Danda-pāśa* are somewhat unusual. They are either taken from sources of Maurya history no longer available to us, or are used by the author to emphasize the efficient system of the Police State based on espionage and punishment, which prevailed during the Maurya period. The sceptre of the king symbolizes the rod of punishment, *Danda* a term used in this sense in the *Rig Veda* (VII, 47, 11); for the king is the chief executive authority. The official designations of the Mauryas, used in the *Artha Śāstra* and in the inscriptions of *Aśoka*, went out of use in northern India probably during the rule of the conquering Bactrian Greeks and later Turko-Iranian tribes. The resurgence of Indian nationalism brought new titles, *e.g.*, the *Danda-nāyaka* prefixed by *Mahā*, during the Imperial Gupta period. The new nomenclature shows that it was intended to create a superior grade of officers and also to systematically reform the bureaucracy. *Danda* may mean both the army and the judicial rod of punishment and thus it is possible to translate it as a military and a judicial title<sup>10</sup> and perhaps the same officer exercised both executive and judicial functions as at present. *Viśākha-datta* might have served in the empire exercising both executive and judicial authority. The case against *Rākshasa*, supported by documentary evidence, is ingeniously proved and indicates the author's acquaintance with judicial procedure.

Sale of honey and of flowers is repeatedly referred to in the *Artha Śāstra*. Act II st. 11 indicates that the dramatist took the simile from bee-keeping. Bee-keeping in Kashmir is thus described by Moorcroft, who visited the Happy Valley in the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh: "The bees are hived exactly as in Europe, but the comb is gathered differently and in a way well worth following at home". After describing the process he adds "The same colony of bees thus produces honey year after year in the same hive, and generation after generation, and has probably done so from the original Aryan settlement of the Kashmir Valley. In consequence of their being thus literally domiciled with the human race, the bees of Kashmir are milder in their manners than those of any other country, although they have a most villainous sting when unduly provoked to use it. Their honey is as pure and clear and sweet as the finest honey of Narbonne."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Fleet translated *Danda-nāyaka* as a "Military title", Bloch as "Judge" Sir John Marshall as "an Officer of Police" Vogel as "a high, probably a Judicial Officer," Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar "as an Officer of Police".

<sup>11</sup> The Modern Review April 1940; Narbonne is in France.

Viśākha-datta mentions the following birds : the Sārāsa in Act III, st. 7, the peacock in Act III, st. 8, the *Sārāsa* goose in Act III, st. 20. The Sārāsa is common in Bihar and the United Provinces. It is a resident species always frequenting the same place. The birds stand five feet in height. The head and upper neck is bright red with ashy crown and a plumage which is bluish ashy grey. The birds pair for life and live in such close companionship that even while they are feeding they are hardly a few yards apart. It is said that if one of the pair is killed the other dies. They make delightful notes if caught young and kept loose in a garden where they maintain an efficient watch. They have a loud trumpet-like call which is uttered when disturbed and when they are on the wing. As these birds do not live in flocks, nor can their atrocious dissonance be termed a melodious call, it is possible that the dramatist refers to another bird called the Demoiselle Crane (*Anthropoides Virgo*) a common visitor in flocks to Northern India in autumn. The Sārāsa does not live in river beds but is found in marshy spots, jheel, tank and rice fields and is with us all the year round. The Demoiselle Crane, on the other hand, arrives in India about October and stays until the beginning of April. The passage of the flock is an impressive sight. Those who recognize the call may see, on an autumn morning, on looking up in the distant sky a vast tangled skein of birds. The birds travel like an army in the sky, big flocks, small flocks, single birds, all travelling in the same line. Then perhaps the leading flock circles round in a vast swirl, feeling for its direction; the next formations close up and again the army moves forward. As they go a single bird trumpets, answered by others. The crane's powers of uttering these sonorous notes are attributed to the peculiar formation of its wind pipe. The flocks pass the middle of the day and the night in open river beds. The Demoiselle Crane is called Krauncha in Sanskrit from which are derived Kunj and Kulan current in North India.

The domestication of the pea fowl is of ancient date as the gorgeous plumage of the bird and its strutting pompous pride appear to have attracted notice very early in India. The Bavoru Jātaka, a Pāli work of about 500 B.C., mentions that Indian traders took peacocks to Babylonia. Rice, peacocks and sandalwood, exported from India, were known to the Greeks by their Tamil names. In the Artha Śāstra the peacock is mentioned among the list of birds to be kept near the royal palace to detect the presence of snakes and (venomous) reptiles and insects.

The peacock is polygamous, his harem consisting of two to five hens. He takes no share in family duties. His call is a loud trumpet—a scream resembling the miaow of a gigantic cat; in North India it is said to form the syllabus *menh-ao*—come rain; for the peacock is especially noisy at the approach of the rainy season. From June to August is the breeding season of the peafowl, which closes in October. The reference in Act III, st. 8 to the normal behaviour of the mayurn (peacock) in autumn is thus appropriate.

In Act III, st. 20 the bird referred to as *Hamsa* is the Anser Indicus, known to sportsmen as the Bar-headed Goose. It is grey brown and white in colour. It breeds in summer in Central Asia, Western China, Tibet and Ladakh and arrives in India in October to depart for the North in March. It is chiefly a riverine species, spending the hours of rest and daylight on the sand banks of the Ganges and the great rivers of Northern India. The birds feed in flocks of twenty to hundred in surrounding fields during the night. They fly high in the air with a measured beat of the wings in regular formation of lines. The call is a deep sonorous note uttered by several birds in unison. Telang's text has *rāja-hamsa*—swan.

Of the tribes mentioned in Act V, st. 11 *Huna* or the White Huns were not known in the Maurya period. Act V, st. 11. The mention of the *Huna* whose raids on the Gupta empire do not begin until Skanda-Gupta repelled the first attack in 455 A.C., might suggest that Viśākha-datta could not have been contemporary of Chandra-Gupta II. It is, however, possible that he was aware of the *Huna* at the close of the fourth century for they were gathering on the Oxus and in the mountains of Afghanistan and the north-west of India although the storm did not break on the fertile plains of India until much later. Between 370 and 380 A.C. a branch of the Hun tribes penetrated from the steppes north of the Caspian Sea into southern Russia, eastern Iran and India. The Epilogue to Sven Hedin's recent work entitled "*Ching-Kai-Shaik*" contains, an interesting account of Hun invasions of China, India and Europe. The *Magadhas* are the people of South Bihar, adherents of Rākshasa. The *Khasa*, on the other hand, were undoubtedly a people known to the Mauryas and in the Buddhist chronicles of Ceylon the *Khasa* figure, among the people subdued by Aśoka, in the Upper Panjāb. The term *Khasa* is still in use in Kumaon Hills. It has been, from time immemorial, an appellation the most wide-spread through all the Himalayan range. Ptolemy places the *Khasa* in the Western

Himalayas. They are mentioned in the Mahābhārata and also in the law books of Manu where the name occurs side by side with *Darada*. The latter are mentioned by Kalhana in his Sanskrit history of Kashmir. Kalhana mentions the *Khasa* more than forty times, among the hill tribes on the borders of Kashmir. Bahar also refers to a people of the name of Khas in the eastern Hindu-Koh. Khasagiri or according to a form more approaching the Zend Khashaghairi, signifies the mountains of the *Khasa*. The *Khasa* tribes still inhabit the region to the south and west of the Pir Panjal range on the Kashmir border and are now known as Khakha. They are included in the sub-division of Hill Rajput Mahomedans. The Hindu *Khasa* inhabit various parts of the Himalayan Range and from them are now recruited the famous regiments of the Garhwalis and the Kumaonis. The *Gāndhāras* were a tribe of the Āryas settled in eastern Afghanistan and the Rig Veda mentions them as breeders of sheep. In one of the Vedic hymns the wife says with reference to the husband "I shall always be for him a Gandhāra ewe." Gandhāra included the modern Peshawar district as well as territory to the east of the Indus. Its two great cities were Taxila and Peukelaotis at the time of Alexander's invasion. The *Gāndhāras* are also mentioned in the Atharva-Veda (V. 22) together with the *Bālīkas* and other tribes in the north-west. In the great war, the theme of the Mahābhārata, the *Gāndhāra* tribes together with the *Saka* and *Yavana* of the north-west are mentioned as allies of the Kurus and opponents of the Pāndavas. The *Saka* or Scythians permanently subjugated one fifth of India and their dominion included Panjāb, Sindh, Rajputana, Gujarat, Kathiawad and Central India. The *Saka* conquerors were Indianized in the second generation and in their inscriptions, composed in a mixture of Sanskrit and Prākṛit or pure Sanskrit, they replaced the Pāli of the earlier Buddhist period. Their name survives in Scistan, situated between India and Iran which was known as Sigistan, from Sanskrit Śakasthāna. The *Yavana* are Greeks who before Alexander's time had settled in Afghanistan probably during the Achaemenian empire of the Persians. Alexander the Great found a republican colony of Greeks at Nysa in Afghanistan with whom he feasted in Hellenic fashion for ten days on his way to India. The term *Yavana* was later used for the Bactrian Greeks who occupied the north-west provinces of the Mauryan empire on the decline of the central authority.

From the mention of these North India and hill tribes and of the names of countries such as Kulūta, Kashmir and Sindh it is possible to infer that Viśūka-datta belonged to North

India. This view is supported by references in the play to the Kāśa flower, and the bird Hamsa which is found in the rivers of North India. Viśākha-datta describes pearls as being snow-white which suggests a northern origin ; and the reference to the new moon (Act VI, st. 10) is a belief still prevalent in the North. Above all this description of Pātaliputra situated on the Ganges (Act. III, st. 9) which can only be approached from the north-west after the crossing of the Sonu (Act I, st. 16) suggests the familiarity of one who probably was a native of this part of the country.

Siva and Vishṇu are mentioned in the Upanishads as personifications of the Ātman. Both are mentioned in the Epics. Viśākha-datta refers poetically in Act I, st. 1, and 2, Act III, st. 20 and 21, Act VII, st. 19 to Siva and Vishṇu. It cannot, however, be presumed that he was devoted to the worship of either of them, for he deals with religion in the manner of a dramatist. S. P. Pandit wrote : " From the fact that Kālidāsa invariably invokes Śiva at the commencement of his works, it would be wrong to assume that he was a strict Śaiva. His veneration for Vishṇu appears to have been even greater than for Śiva. For his works abound with passages extolling the attributes of the former, whom he seems to consider the head of the Hindu pantheon. In language used by the Vaiṣṇava works he describes Vishṇu as the Deity of whom all the other gods, including Śiva, are but so many different manifestations. See Raghu-vamśa X, 16, 17. The second canto of Kumāra-Sambhava assigns to Brahmadeva the same high attributes as are assigned to Vishṇu in the tenth canto of the Raghu-vamśa, which would show that he was no more a Śaiva than he was a Vaiṣṇava or a worshipper of Brahma-deva. In one place he says all the three are one. See Kumāra-Sambhava VII 44."<sup>12</sup> The essence of religious belief according to the Indians lies in the cultivation of a non-dogmatic attitude of mind. According to Bāṇa's Harsha-charita, in Divākara-mitra's retreat there assembled Jainas, Buddhists, materialists, followers of different philosophers and holders of different theistic beliefs. Hsuan Tsang, the learned Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, tells us that in the seventh century the great King of North India, Harsha-Vardhana installed statues of the Blessed One, the Sun-god and Śiva. The Indian attitude may be illustrated by two verses. Bilvamangala writes " Undoubtedly I am a follower of Śiva. Let there be no doubt about that, nor of my meditation of the five lettered text sacred to Śiva. Nevertheless

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<sup>12</sup> Vikrama and Urvashī. Notes p. 2.

my mind constantly revels in recalling the picture of the beautiful face of the child Krishna, beloved of the Gopī maidens." And Appaya Dikshita says "I find no difference in essence between Śiva, the lord of the world, and Viṣṇu the Spirit of the universe. Yet my devotion is for Him whose crest is adorned by the crescent-moon (Śiva)." The unity of God is expressed by the mystic symbol AUM where A represents Viṣṇu, U Śiva and M Brahmā.<sup>13</sup> In the Maurya period the worship of Śiva and Viṣṇu is mentioned by Megasthenes. It continued unabated during the Gupta Age; and it continues today. The temples of Kedarātha (Śiva) and Badrinātha (Viṣṇu) in the Himalayas attract thousands of pilgrims during the annual pilgrimage. These institutions were founded by the great master of dialectics, Śaṅkara, who defeated the Buddhists in public controversies by the method of the syllogism referred to in Act V, st. 10 *supra*. Referring to these two temples Frank S. Smythe, conqueror of the Himalayan peak Kamet, writes "That Kumaon and Garhwal should be especially consecrated to the gods of Indian mysticism, is easily understandable. Is there any region of the Himalayas, or even of the world, to excel this region in beauty and grandeur? Where else are there to be found such narrow and precipitous valleys and gorges, such serene vistas of alp, forest, snowfield and peak? This abode of snow is rightly the goal of the heat-enervated people of the plains. Never was a pilgrimage of finer accomplishment. It is the perfect antidote to a static life, and it cannot fail to inspire in the dullest a nobler conception of the universe."<sup>14</sup> In the Signet Ring we have evidence of religious tolerance. Buddhist traditions and Jātaka stories are referred to with respect and a Jaina monk is honoured and trusted. Rākshasa also refers with respect to the Sun at the end of the fourth Act. The adoration of the "dazzling Sūrya" is still the living faith of millions in India including the remnant of the ancient Iranians known as the Parsis. Sun worship dates from the Vedic period and the founding of Sun temples continued in various parts of India of which the temple of Sūrya built in Orissa in the thirteenth century is a fine example. During the Gupta Age we learn from an inscription at Gwalior that one Matrichata erected a temple of the Sun in the reign of the Hun King Tormāna, son of Mihirkula.<sup>15</sup> The famous temple of the Sun built by king Lalitāditya of

<sup>13</sup> Radhakrishnan; *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, 1940, p. 311.

<sup>14</sup> *The Vale of Flowers*, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Fleet's *Gupta Inscriptions*, No. 37.



Kashmir (700-736 A.C.) continues to attract visitors to Kashmir.<sup>16</sup> Even after conversion to Islam the Sun-Worship. Kashmiris continued to worship the Sun. Mirza Haidor, the Kashmiri historian, describes these heretical sects known as the Shammasi.<sup>17</sup> The real founder of the Moghul empire in India, Akbar, attempted to revive the worship of the Sun. Akbar, like Menander, Kanishka and many others before him, had accepted the basic Indian principle of religious tolerance. The Portuguese priests who attended his court tell us "It is quite true that he held the law of Mahomet of no account; but he was much addicted to the worship of the Sun to which he made prayers four times a day, namely in the morning when he rose, at noon on retiring to bed and again at midnight. On each occasion, he repeated as many as a thousand and fifty names of the luminary, which he counted by means of small balls threaded like our paternosters, but consisting of beautiful precious stones." This account is corroborated by the contemporary Muslim historian Badaoni who tells us that the people used to crowd every morning "opposite to the window near which His Majesty used to pray to the Sun. . . . No sooner had His Majesty finished saying the thousand and one names of the 'Greater Luminary' and stepped into the balcony, than the whole crowd prostrated themselves."<sup>18</sup> How completely Akbar was influenced by Indian environment may be gauged from the following account of Badaoni. "His Majesty," he says, "collected the opinions of every one, especially of such as were not Muhammadans, retaining whatever he approved of, and rejecting everything which was against his disposition, and ran counter to his wishes. From his earliest childhood to his manhood, and from his manhood to old age, His Majesty has passed through the most various phases, and through all sorts of religious practices and sectarian beliefs, and has collected everything which people can find in books, with a talent of selection peculiar to him, and a spirit of enquiry opposed to every (Islamic) principle. Thus a faith based on some elementary principles traced itself on the mirror of his heart, and as a result of all the influences brought to bear on His Majesty, there grew, gradually as the outline on a stone, the conviction in his heart that there were sensible men in all

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<sup>16</sup> The famous shrine is near Matan (Sk. Mātāṇḍa) whose ruins according to M. Foucher, "rise proudly like a Greek temple on a promontory."

<sup>17</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, Jarrett's translation, Vol. II p. 353 note.

<sup>18</sup> *Muntakhab-ut-tawarikh*, Vol. II p. 336.

religions, and abstemious thinkers, and men endowed with miraculous powers, among all nations. If some true knowledge was thus everywhere to be found, why should truth be confined to one religion, or to a creed like the Islam, which was comparatively new, and scarcely a thousand years old; why should one claim a preference without having superiority conferred on itself? Moreover Sumanis and Brahmins managed to get frequent private interviews with His Majesty. As they surpass other men in their treatises on morals, and in physical and religious sciences, and reach a high degree in their knowledge of the future, in spiritual power and human perfection, they brought proofs, based on reason and testimony, for the truth of their own, and the fallacies of other religions, and inculcated their doctrines so firmly and so skilfully represented things as quite self-evident which require consideration that no man, by expressing his doubts, could now raise a doubt in His Majesty, even if mountains were to crumble to dust, or the heavens were to tear asunder.<sup>19</sup>

In Act V, st. 10, the dramatist compares a debater in a public assembly to a general marshalling his forces for victory. A scholar in India, as in China, occupied a high place in public esteem. The method of the Deductive Logic is thus explained in Sanskrit. Wherever there is smoke, there is fire. There is smoke on this mountain. Therefore, there must be fire on this mountain. The presence of smoke is the middle term. It is capable of being joined with the major term, presence of fire, in an affirmative proposition which, in the Western method, is called the "major premise." It is also capable of being joined in an affirmative proposition with a kitchen. It is always incapable of being joined in an affirmative proposition with a pool of water where we know there never can be fire and therefore the major term, presence of fire, can never be predicated of it. Such a middle term leads us to the conclusion that there is fire on the mountain. But when the middle term is itself the major term, it would be an "identical proposition" and no conclusion could be drawn. The method of the Syllogism was used in the Middle Ages by Schoolmen who took for their major premise a text from the Bible and deduced from it the conclusions they desired. In the last century Swami Dayanand Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj, similarly defeated in open public contests the advocates of idol worship and proved that idolatry was no part of Aryan religious beliefs.

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<sup>19</sup> Ain-i-Akbari, Jarrett's translation, Vol. I, p. 179.

The sale of flesh is mentioned in Act V, st. 21. There can be no doubt that flesh was exposed for sale in public in the time of Viśākha-datta. During the Maurya period there was a Superintendent of Slaughter-houses and sale of meat was regulated by the State. A chapter is devoted to this in the Artha Śāstra. "Butchers shall sell fresh and boneless flesh of beasts just killed. If they sell bony flesh, they shall give an equivalent compensation."<sup>20</sup> Refraining from flesh is no part of the Vedic religion. Indeed animal sacrifice was the main part of it opposed by the Buddhists and the Jainas who laid stress on Ahimsā or non-violence. For the upper classes it was thus a heresy to refrain from eating meat; it was the way of Buddhists, the Jainas and other Non-conformists. To this day, as a rule, Brahmans from Kashmir to Bengal are meat-eaters while only in those parts where Buddhism or Jainism predominated for a long time, including the South, the Brahmans are now vegetarians. The sale of fish is also repeatedly referred to in the Artha Śāstra and dried fish was apparently much esteemed. It is noteworthy that Brahmans who have ceased to eat meat, generally eat fish to this day. Indians, generally speaking, are not vegetarians except for economic reasons. Where, however, they have become vegetarians it is mainly due to the influence of Buddhism. The Emperor Aśoka prohibited the slaughter of animals for sacrifice and this has had far reaching consequences. Non-violence or Ahimsā is, indeed, part of the ancient national religion of India, and as much an intrinsic part of its culture as the doctrine of Karma which, too, is accepted by the Buddhists and the Jainas. Ahimsā is enjoined for the Parivrajaka in the Artha Śāstra Bk. I ch. 3 and was confined to the fourth order. The Buddhists and the Jainas generalized it.

In Act VI, st. 5 Rākshasa compares royal sovereignty to a woman who goes out of the *gotra* of the husband to remarry. The subject of woman's right to remarry is dealt with in detail in the Artha Śāstra in Bk. III ch. 4. Women of all castes, including Brahman, were entitled to remarry upon the death of the husband, or where the husband had gone abroad and had not been heard of, or had become a recluse. Where the husband had not been heard of, or had deserted the wife, or become a recluse, she could remarry after waiting for a specified

<sup>20</sup> Bk. II Ch. 26. In his Political Science Kāmandaka (4th century A. C.) declares abstention from meat and like practices to be meritorious Bk. I Ch. 2.

time for his return. "If the wife of an absent husband lacks maintenance and is deserted by well-to-do relatives she may remarry one whom she likes and who is in a position to maintain her and relieve her misery." In the case of a husband who has gone away and is not heard of the wife may remarry "one whom she likes with the permission of the judges." Where the husband was dead, or had become an ascetic, the wife could marry the husband's brother. "If there are a number of brothers to her lost husband, she shall marry such one of them as is next in age to her former husband, or as is virtuous and is capable of protecting her, or one who is the youngest and unmarried. If there are no brothers to her lost husband, she may marry one who belongs to the same *gotra* as her husband's or a relative, i.e., of the same family. But if there are many such persons as can be selected in marriage, she shall choose one who is a nearer relation of her lost husband." That the choice in remarriage was limited in this manner is clearly brought out by the following verse :—

"If a woman violates the above rule by remarrying one who is not a kinsman (*dāyāda*) of her husband, then the woman and the man who remarry each other, those who have given her in remarriage, and those who have given their consent to it, shall all be liable to the punishment for elopement."<sup>21</sup> It would seem that the law of the fourth century B.C. was in force when the Signet Ring was written.

The story of the Deluge, and the eventual salvaging of the earth by Vishnu, is related in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa III 13-19. See also Max Müller's India, What Can It Teach Us p. 137 and note 11 p. 367.

From the Gupta Inscriptions collected by Dr. Fleet it is evident that the Vaishṇava faith was predominant during the Gupta Age and that the Kings of the imperial dynasty probably belonged to the Vaishṇava Sāṃpradāya (congregation).

For an interesting account of the Gupta Age of Enlightenment Sir R. G. Bhandarkar's Peep into the Early History of India should be consulted at p. 47; for a detailed account of the development of literature, arts and sciences, of architecture, of enlightened administration, and maintenance of law and order, as well as of religious tolerance during this remarkable period (320-606 A.C.) reference should be made to Vincent Smith's Early History of India, 4th Edition, chapters XI and XII. Fa-hien, the Chinese pilgrim, who was in Pāṭaliputra

<sup>21</sup> Dr. R. Shamasastry's Artha Śāstra 2nd Ed. pp. 195-6.

when the Signet Ring was probably produced, wrote that the people were rich and prosperous in the towns of the empire and seemed to him to emulate each other in the practice of virtue. Charitable institutions were numerous, rest houses for travellers were provided on the highways and the capital possessed an excellent free hospital endowed by benevolent and educated citizens. "Hither come all poor or helpless patients suffering from all kinds of infirmities. They are well taken care of, and a doctor attends them; food and medicine being supplied according to their wants. Thus they are made quite comfortable, and when they are well, they may go away." With reference to this observation of the learned pilgrim Vincent Smith writes: "It may be doubted if any equally efficient foundation was to be seen elsewhere in the world at that date; and its existence, anticipating the deeds of modern Christian charity speaks well both for the citizens who endowed it, and for the genius of the great Aśoka, whose teaching still bore such wholesome fruit many centuries after his decease."<sup>22</sup>

Only a people that for thousands of years has been rooted to the good earth can write history, and create a dominion and literature. The tenacity and diligence of the peasant class is the foundation of the Indian nation. The plough, not the sword, has enlarged and fortified the people in India as in China. The Gupta traditions still flourished when the most famous of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims Hsuan Tsang visited India in the seventh century. "Though the Indians," he writes, "are of a light temperament, they are distinguished by the straightforwardness and honesty of their character. With regard to riches they never take anything unjustly; with regard to justice they make even excessive concessions . . . Straightforwardness is the distinguishing feature of their administration." In the eleventh century Idrisi in his Geography sums up the opinions of the Muslim conquerors of India in the following words: "The Indians are naturally inclined to justice, and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to their engagements are wellknown, and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side." (Elliot, *History of India*, Vol. I. p. 88).

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<sup>22</sup> Early History of India, 4th Ed. p. 312-3.

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### THE NANDAS, THE MAURYAS AND CHĀṆAKYA

Alexander the Great, after defeating Darius III and completing the conquest of Iran in 330 B.C., turned towards the northwest of India which was then the eastern limit of the Achaemenian empire of Iran. Herodotus tells us that the Indus region was the twentieth satrapy of the empire of Darius I, and a third of the revenue of the Achaemenian empire, 360 talents of gold dust, equivalent to over a million pounds sterling, was contributed by the Indian satrapy. Alexander entered India through Afghanistan and had to fight his way to the Panjāb. On the banks of the Hydaspes he was met by Porus, the Indian King, who opposed him bravely though unsuccessfully. The invader gained a pyrrhic victory. He found he could not hold the Indian territory with Greek garrisons and was obliged to confirm Porus as the ruler in subordinate alliance with the Greek empire and to give up all ideas of a further march to the region of the Ganges. Matthew Arnold wrote about Alexander's campaign:

The East bowed low before the blast  
In patient, deep disdain;  
She let the legions thunder past,  
And plunged in thought again.

So far as India was concerned this is an inaccurate description of what actually happened. Alexander was engaged in constant fighting while he was in the Panjāb. He was told that he would have to cross a desert of eleven days' march to reach the Ganges, beyond which lay the peoples of the Ganges region and the eastern people whose mighty king kept in the field an army of 20,000 cavalry, 200,000 infantry, 2,000 chariots and 3,000 to 4,000 war elephants. Thereupon, the Macedonian army struck and refused to go a step further. For three days, Alexander shut himself in his tent refusing to yield. Eventually he had to yield, as his army was on the point of mutiny,<sup>1</sup> and he left India. During his retreat from India, the fighting continued and when his back was turned the Greek garrisons which he had left behind were destroyed and expelled. "Within three years of his departure," writes Vincent Smith "his officers had been ousted, his garrisons destroyed and almost all trace of his rule had disappeared. The colonies which he

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, pp. 373 and 468.

founded in India, unlike those established in the other Asiatic provinces, took no root. The campaign, although carefully designed to secure a permanent conquest, was, in actual effect, no more than a brilliantly successful raid on a gigantic scale, which left upon India no mark save the horrid scars of bloody war."<sup>2</sup>

The champion of Indian liberty who conquered and drove the Greeks out of India was Chandragupta Maurya both according to Indian tradition and the account of Greek historians. "This prince," writes Justin, "was of humble origin, but was called to royalty by the power of the gods; for having offended Alexander by his impertinent language he was ordered to be put to death and escaped only by flight and collecting bands of robbers, he roused the Indians to renew the empire. In the wars which he waged with the captains of Alexander he was distinguished in the van mounted on an elephant of great size and strength. Having thus acquired power Sandrokottos reigned at the same time that Seleukus laid the foundation of his dominion."<sup>3</sup> In this passage an error was discovered by Von Gutschmid who read Nandrum in place of Alexandrum.<sup>4</sup> If the correction is accepted the account of Justin would show that Sandrokottos (Chandragupta) escaped from the wrath of the Nanda King, and not from Alexander, and that the reference here is to the Nanda, whose capital at Pāṭaliputra is the scene of the Signet Ring.

Among the great generals of Alexander were Seleucus and Antigonus who emerged successful out of the internecine war which followed the death of the Macedonian Conqueror. Antigonus was at first successful but eventually succumbed to Seleucus. Seleucus conquered Syria from Demetrius, son of Antigonus in 312 B.C. and from there made preparations for the reconquest of the lost territories in India. He invaded India with a large army and crossed the Indus in 305 B.C. hoping to imitate the exploits of Alexander the Great. We have no details of this invasion and of the war with Chandragupta which followed; but the peace between these two powerful monarchs is believed to have been concluded in 303 B.C. From Justin we learn that a war did take place. "Seleucus Nikator.... first seizing Babylon, then reducing Bactriana, his power being increased by the first success, thereafter passed into India, which since Alexander's death had killed its governors, thinking

<sup>2</sup> Early History of India, 4th Ed. p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Justin XV, 4.

<sup>4</sup> McCrindle; Invasion of India by Alexander, p. 327.

thereby to shake off from its neck the yoke of slavery. Sandro-kottos had made it free, but when victory was gained, he changed the name of freedom to that of bondage, for he oppressed with servitude the very people whom he had himself rescued from foreign domination. Sandro-kottos, having thus gained the crown, held India at the time when Seleucus was laying the foundation of his future greatness. Seleucus waged war on Sandro-kottos."<sup>5</sup> That Seleucus made war on Chandragupta is further confirmed by Appianus "until he made friends and entered into relations of marriage with him."<sup>6</sup> To this might be added the account of Strabo that Seleucus "received in return five hundred elephants."<sup>7</sup> Justin wrote that Seleucus after thus "settling affairs on this side of India directed his march against Antigonus."<sup>8</sup> Dr. Otto Stein and other German scholars have found these Greek accounts difficult to accept in their entirety. The defeat of a well equipped European army led by Alexander's ablest general, who had earned the title of Nikator or conqueror, is inconceivable to them; they have argued that probably a peace was concluded without actual fighting. Also the marriage of a Greek princess to an Indian is no less inconceivable and it has been urged that such an alliance must have been equally abhorrent to the Indians who, in turn, probably regarded the Greeks as barbarians.<sup>9</sup>

Chandragupta had an army of over half a million which could take the field, 9,000 war elephants and numerous chariots.<sup>10</sup> There can be no doubt that the formidable army of Chandragupta successfully repelled the Greek invasion. Vincent Smith thus summarizes what must have occurred during the war and the peace which followed it: "When the shock of battle came, the hosts of Chandragupta were too strong for the invader, and Seleucus was obliged to retire and conclude a humiliating peace. Not only was he compelled to abandon all thought of conquest in India, but he was constrained to surrender a large part of Ariana to the west of the Indus. In exchange for the comparatively trifling equivalent of five hundred elephants, Chandragupta received the satrapies of Paropanisadai, Aria and Arachosia, the capitals of which were respectively the cities now known as Kabul, Herat and Kandahar. The satrapy of Gedrosia or at least the eastern portion of it, seems also to have been

<sup>5</sup> Justin XV, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Syriake, c. 55.

<sup>7</sup> Geog. XV, 724. Bohn's translation.

<sup>8</sup> Justin XV, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Stein; Kautilya and Megasthenes Ch. I.

<sup>10</sup> Cambridge History of India Vol. I, p. 430.



included in the cession, and the high contracting powers ratified the peace by "a matrimonial alliance" which phrase probably means that Seloukus gave a daughter to his Indian rival."<sup>11</sup> The five hundred Indian elephants played a conspicuous part in the final overthrow of Antigonus at Ipsus in 301 B.C.

Muller in his *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* gives the following extract from Justin regarding Chandragupta "Having offended Alexander by his impertinent language he was ordered to be put to death and escaped only by flight. Fatigued with his journey he lay down to rest, when a lion of large size came and licked off the sweat that poured from him with his tongue, and retired without doing him any harm. The prodigy inspired him with ambitious hopes and collecting bands of robbers he roused the Indians to rebellion. When he prepared for war against the captains of Alexander, a wild elephant of enormous size approached him and received him on his back as if he had been tamed." Justin wrote in the second century A.C. relying on contemporary Greek accounts. There can be no doubt that the remarkable career of Chandragupta had already made him a legendary figure in his life time in the eyes of his countrymen as well as of foreign political observers.

Simultaneously with the Persian conquests of Darius I in north-west India Bimbisāra and Ajāta-śatru, the Nine Nandas, kings who ruled in Magadha, were consolidating their rule over the valley of the Ganges. In his introduction to the translation of the *Mahāvamśa*, the celebrated Ceylonese Buddhist chronicler, Prof. Geiger determines the dates of the accession and death of these two rulers as 543 B.C., 491 B.C. and 491 B.C., 459 B.C. respectively. They belonged to the House of Śisunāga and the *Purāṇas* mention ten kings of this dynasty who are described as Kshatriyas. The last of them was Mahānandin. According to the *Purāṇas*, Mahānandin married a Śūdra woman and thus became the founder of a dynasty lower in caste to the Kshatriyas.<sup>12</sup> He was followed by his descendants Mahāpadma and his eight sons who are traditionally referred to as the Nine Nandas. At the time when Alexander the Great was in the Panjāb in 326 B.C. the reigning Nanda

<sup>11</sup> *Early History of India* 4th Ed. p. 125. Gedrosia—Baluchistan. *Vide also Cambridge History of India* Vol. I p. 472; "Seleucus was content to secure a safe retirement and a gift of 500 elephants by the surrender of all the Greek dominions as far as the Kabul Valley. Upon these terms a matrimonial alliance was arranged."

<sup>12</sup> *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, XII Skandha.

is believed to have been Dhana Nanda who ruled over the Prasioi, (Sk. Prāchya), 'eastern nations.' What Alexander, already too remote from his base, was unable to do, Chandragupta accomplished and the suzerainty of the Nandas passed to the Mauryas. According to the Purāṇas the Nandas were not a different family from the Śiśunāgas but were their direct descendants and the last, and last but one, of the Śiśunāgas, viz., Mahānandin and Nandi-Vardhana bear names which show this connection. In literature, however, the Nandas are referred to in two groups, the 'old' and the 'new' Nandas. K. P. Jayswal suggested that the Nava-Nanda meant not nine but new as the correct designation of the later group. In the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela, King of Kalinga (Orissa), a Nanda King is twice mentioned. Rakhaldas Banerji remarked "Three centuries before Kharavela and two hundred years before Aśoka, Kalinga was conquered by Nanda I or Nanda-Vardhana, the founder of the Nanda dynasty of Magadha. This invasion was not a mere raid and Kalinga continued under the Nanda kings at least for some time." "This is proved by the mention of public works undertaken during the reign of Nanda I who excavated a canal in this country."<sup>13</sup>

In the Preface of Turnour's edition of the Mahāvamsa the Buddhist tradition about Chandragupta is thus related :  
Origin of Chandragupta.
Chandragupta belonged to a Kshatriya clan in the hills known as Moriya, a branch of the illustrious Sakyas, the clan of the Buddha. His father, a petty chief, was killed in battle against a rival chief and his widow who was enceinte fled to Pāṭaliputra to seek the protection of her relatives the Nandas. There she gave birth to Chandragupta. According to other traditions he was brought up by a shepherd and passed his early life tending cattle. It so happened that Chāṇakya, a resident of the city of Takshasilā (Taxila), while on a visit to Pāṭaliputra, was insulted at the court of Dhana Nanda and was leaving the city in a rage. He saw the boy Chandragupta holding a mock court on the village common as the rajah of the village boys. Chāṇakya detected signs of royalty in the little lad and took him along to Takshasilā where he educated him especially in the military science and prepared him as a fit weapon for the execution of his plans against the Nanda ruler.<sup>14</sup> This tradition is alluded to in the Signet Ring Act VII, st. 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, III p. 502-3; and *Cambridge History of India*, Vol I, pp. 314.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson; *Theatre of the Hindus*, Vol. II p. 137.

According to Buddhist tradition Maurya is derived from mayura meaning peacock. One version traces it to a region in the Himalaya abounding in peacocks while another to Moriya-nagar, a town built with "bricks coloured like peacock's necks," and the people who built it known as the Moriyas. One of Aśoka's Pillars has a peacock carved at the base and the peacock emblem is carved at three places on the Sanchi Stūpa. Grünwedel was of the opinion that the peacock was the dynastic symbol of the Maurya Kings; Sir John Marshall and M. Foucher share this view. From the Valley of Swat (Sk. Suvastu) many Buddhist sculptures have been brought to the Indian Museum at Calcutta, nearly all of which have the peacock symbol. Hsuan Tsang associates the Mayura Raja with the country over the Mora Pass in the Swat valley in the north-west frontier.

The Purāṇas, on the other hand, trace Maurya from Murā, a wife of the Nanda king. Dhundirāja, Commentator of the Mudrā-Rākshasa, has described this lady Murā as the daughter of a Śūdra. He has apparently based this statement on the text of the prophecy in the Purāṇas that a son of Mahānandin by a Śūdra woman will become the ruler and destroy the Kshatriyas; that a Brahmana, Kautilya, will uproot the rulers of Śūdra origin and anoint Chandragupta as King.<sup>15</sup> The Brahmana Kautilya, when he anointed Chandragupta, to replace the Śūdras, as king, must have chosen as recipient of sovereignty and of the sacred waters of the coronation a suitable Kshatriya but this is not referred to in the Purāṇas. The Greek version agrees with the Purāṇas in ascribing a low origin to the Nandas. While, however, according to the Purāṇas the low origin of the Nandas was due to their low caste mother, the Greek account traces it to their father of low caste, a handsome barber, paramour of the queen of the Nanda, who murdered her husband the king. Diodorus wrote that Porus informed Alexander "that the King of the Gangaridai was a man of quite worthless character and held in no respect, as he was thought to be the son of a barber." Curtius gives us more details of Porus' statement to Alexander "that the present king (of Pāṭaliputra) was not merely a man originally of no distinction, but even of the very meanest condition. His father was in fact a barber...." "Then under the pretext of acting as guardian to the royal children, he (the paramour) usurped the supreme authority, and having put the young princes to death, begot the present king who was detested and held cheap by his subjects."

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

In the play the Nandas are mentioned as of illustrious lineage (Act VI, st. 6) and mighty kings (Act II, st. 4, Act III, st. 18, Act III, st. 27, Act IV, st. 11). It is noteworthy that it is Chandragupta who, on the other hand, is referred to as an upstart and a person of obscure or humble birth, Kula-hīna, (Act II, st. 7; and Act VI, st. 6). Viśākha-datta has either deliberately altered the traditional account to enhance the glory of the self-made hero Chandragupta and of Chāṇakya, who directed the revolution against a powerful dynasty, or he had sources of information which are not now available to us. There can be no doubt, however, that he was aware of the traditional account of the Buddhists for he makes Chandragupta a Nandānvaya, of the family of the Nandas, and this fact is utilized to sow doubt in the mind of Prince Malayaketu against Rākshasa, the hereditary prime minister of the Nandas. Viśākha-datta has skilfully utilized the traditional account about the Nandas, their avarice and hoarded wealth, the wrathful nature of Chāṇakya, his determination to destroy the Nandas by all means including magic and his vow to wear his hair loose until the final accomplishment of his aim.<sup>16</sup> He evidently knew the story, related in the Brihat-Kathā by Vararuchi, which ends with the incident at the Court of the Nanda King when Chāṇakya was removed from his seat of honour and turned out of the banquet hall, burning with rage while he threatened the king with destruction before all the court.

Chāṇakya is not mentioned by the Greek ambassador Megasthenes at the court of Pāṭaliputra. Stein writes "And one question more. If Chandragupta had a minister of great fame called Chāṇakya, Vishnu-gupta or Kautilya; if Megasthenes came often to India or at least often had audiences with the Indian King, when after all he has so much to hand down to posterity (uberliefert) about the king and his officials, and has even mentioned their names, why should he not have mentioned that of the great man of that period, or was it that Kautilya was no longer alive?"<sup>17</sup> The answer to this might be that Megasthenes' Indika is believed to have consisted of four books which are lost and only fragments have come down to us. Assuming that Megasthenes did not mention Chāṇakya that by itself could not prove that no such person existed; for argumentum ex silentio is futile. Patañjali who wrote in the middle of the second

<sup>16</sup> Act III, st. 27; Act I, st. 11, Act IV, st. 12; Act I, st. 9, Act III, st. 29.

<sup>17</sup> Kautilya and Megasthenes, p. 118.

century B.C. has made no mention of Aśoka! But Indian literature is full of allusions to Chāṇakya. Kāmandaka, author of a work on Political Science, refers to Chāṇakya as his spiritual teacher. He describes him as a man of renowned family, versed in the Vedas, who deposed the powerful Nanda and crowned in his place Chandragupta, the moon among the people (Nṛi-Chandra), mentions him as the author of the Artha Śāstra and calls him Vishṇu-gupta.<sup>18</sup> The Jātaka-mālā of Āryasūra mentions Kautilya as the author of the Artha Śāstra. This work of Āryasūra was translated into Chinese in 443 A.C. In another work, the Lankāvatāra, Āryasūra mentions Kautilya as a Rishi.<sup>19</sup> Viśākha-datta calls him Mahātmā and pays homage to him in Act VII, st. 7. Dandin the great prose writer, mentions Vishṇu-gupta as the great Āchārya (preceptor, chancellor) and Master of Political Science; while Bāṇa, poet and novelist of the seventh century, refers to the Political Science of Kautilya although he writes disapprovingly of the methods advocated in that ancient work. Numerous extracts have been found in literature from the Artha Śāstra attributed to Chāṇakya. Lastly, there is the verse at the end of the Artha Śāstra which mentions Vishṇu-gupta as the author who being unable to tolerate the decline of learning, law and culture (Śāstra) and military strength (Śāstra) of the country under the Nandas quickly achieved its liberation. A great movement owes its growth to great writers. Its basic principles have to be committed to writing to ensure the uniform application of its principles. The last verse is, therefore, important for it tells us why the Artha Śāstra was written. It may be compared to the following stanza :—

Show us not the aim without the way  
For ends and means on earth are so entangled  
That changing one, you change the other too;  
Each different path brings other ends in view.<sup>20</sup>

This remarkable book has been ascribed by Indian literary and historical tradition, immemorial and continuous, to Chāṇakya, (also known as Kautilya or Vishṇu-gupta). Its discovery has thrown an interesting light on the life of the people in ancient India and on the methods of internal and external policy of their rulers. The book may be described as a manual of political

<sup>18</sup> Kāmandaka 1, 2, 8 (3rd Cent. A.C.)

<sup>19</sup> Āryasūra's works probably belong to the fourth century A.C. for the Lankāvatāra was first translated into Chinese in 443 A.C. and a second time in 513 A.C.

<sup>20</sup> Ferdinand Lassalle : Franz von Sickingen.

economy as well as a work on polity. It deals with a variety of subjects of which the following is a summary. Rules of government in times of peace and war; the selection of ministers, Purohita (Preceptor) and the principal officers of state, of ambassadors and their qualifications; the education of the princes and the rule of succession. The employment of spies and secret agents is dealt with in detail for the security of the state depended largely on the efficient and pitiless working of the secret service. Detailed information is furnished on the working of mines; establishment of factories and store houses; trade and commerce; tolls and passports, testing of gems and coins; revenue, its collection and remission; public markets, weights and measures and balances used in trading; agriculture, canals, dams and irrigation works, cattle and cowherds, maintenance of sanctuaries, preserves and grazing grounds; construction of land routes and embankments, waterways; navigation and fishing; slaughter houses; fire and epidemics and other public disasters; liquor shops and gaming houses, state control of prostitutes; fortifications and defence measures; the planting of fruit and flower trees, protection of the helpless and the infirm by the state; census operations and income-tax. Two long chapters are devoted to the subject of civil and criminal law and judicial proceedings. In family law the Artha Śāstra allows divorce on the ground of mutual dislike of husband and wife<sup>21</sup> and remarriage of women on the ground of desertion, cruelty and impotence.<sup>22</sup> Foreign affairs are dealt with in chapters dealing with the sixfold method of diplomacy and the doctrine of the Maṇḍala or circle of states. The army has a special place in this scheme and details of recruiting, construction of camps, strategy in battle with the forces of infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants are described as well as the use of propaganda speeches and promise of rewards for the troops. The employment of spies for intelligence work and to sow dissensions in the ranks of the enemy, destruction of his supply, granaries and stores, the siege and capture of his fortified positions and the pacification of conquered territory. So far as law and order in the state are concerned it is the duty of the King to firmly exercise his executive authority (Danda) to maintain peace and to provide against violence which is described picturesquely as the law of the fish

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<sup>21</sup> "A woman, hating her husband, cannot dissolve her marriage with him against his will. Nor can a man dissolve his marriage with his wife against her will. But for mutual enmity divorce may be obtained" (parasparam dvēṣhān-mokṣhah) "Ar. Śās. Bk. III ch. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Bk. III, ch. 4.

(*Matsyanyāya*); for in the absence of a stable government the strong would attack the weak just as the stronger fish prey upon the weaker ones. In foreign affairs the King may, if he has the ambition to conquer (*Vijigīṣhu*), try to be the lord of a circle of states and rule the earth unopposed. The contents of the *Artha Śāstra* are arranged scientifically; a unity of plan and structure is noticeable in the whole work which is furnished with an exact table of contents at the beginning and a list, at the end, of particular devices used. There are many cross references scattered through the body of the work and in the last chapter are given thirty-two references to previous chapters. The author's name, Kautilya, occurs in the body of the book as well as in the colophon at the end of some chapters.

An interesting feature of the *Artha Śāstra* (Bk. XI, Ch. 1) is the discussion relating to republican states.

Republics. There is abundant evidence of the republican form of government flourishing in India for many centuries from pre-Buddhist times to the foundation of the Maurya empire. That empire absorbed apparently many of the republican states but some evidently survived as is clear from the *Artha Śāstra* which deals with methods calculated to further their successful absorption. The republics of *Surāshtra* (Kathiawad) appear to have survived the Maurya Imperialism.<sup>23</sup> Jayaswal has quoted long passages from the *Mahābhārata* describing the republican governments in India and added a translation.<sup>24</sup> When Alexander entered the Panjāb he found that the Indians who opposed him had republican forms of government. The princes, however, submitted to him without a fight for they were glad to become his vassals in return for safety. Megasthenes also refers to the Indian republics in his time. "They (the Indians) report everything to the king when the people have a king, and to the magistrates when the people are self-governed, and it is against use and wont for these to give a false report; but indeed no Indian is accused of lying." (McCrindle, *Indian Antiquary*, 1876, p. 92.) The ancient word for a republic was *gaṇa*; it must have been current in the Gupta Age for it is used in this sense in the Signet Ring, *Kṣhātra-gaṇa-mukhya*,<sup>25</sup> the spokesman or president of the *Kṣhatriya* republic. *Mukhya*, a term derived from *mukha*—mouth, is still in current use in North India for the headman of the village who is called *Mukhia*. The office of

<sup>23</sup> Inscription of Balashri, about 58 B.C., *Epigraphia Indica* Vol. VIII, p. 44 and the Inscription of Rudradāman 2nd Cent. A.C. *Ibid.* p. 60.

<sup>24</sup> *Hindu Polity*, p. 128.

<sup>25</sup> Act III, Scene 3; *Ar. Śās.* Bk. XI ch. 1.

the village Mukhia was originally elective ; he is now a nominee of Government.

The Buddhist Jātakas relate the story of the election of the first king called the Mahā-Sammata—the Monarchy. Great Elect. The Mahāvastu Avadāna contains the details of the King's election. The researches of learned German scholars show that monarchy in the Vedic period was elective.<sup>26</sup> The sanction of the subjects, as distinct from the election by the cantons (Sk. Vis), existed as early as the Vedic period.<sup>27</sup> The legend of the Kuru brothers Devāpi and Śantanu referred to in the Yāska<sup>28</sup> shows that in the matter of succession the will of the people was stronger and prevailed over that of the King. This story, which occurs in the Rig Veda (X, 98, 11), is given in detail in the Mahābhārata (V, 149-14-29). The importance of this decision from the point of view of constitutional law was recognized early and it is related at length in the Vishṇu Purāṇa (IV, 10) Vāyu Purāṇa (X, C, iii, 74-87) and Hari Vamśa (xxx). During the Epic period in India monarchy had apparently become stabilized yet the republican form of government continued simultaneously in different parts of the country. The sixth century B.C. was one of vigorous intellectual activity in Greece, Iran and India. The philosophers of Greece, Zarathushtra in Iran, and Buddha and Mahāvīra in India were pioneers of rationalism and their radical thought influenced the rulers in their respective countries. Historic processes, however, brought about changes in due course. First in Iran, then in Greece and lastly in India great empires based on a vigorous nationalism arose. The Maurya empire was founded following a revolution which wrested power from the Nandas in their decline to save the country which was under the subjection of the Iranians and later the Greeks. It was a national government in independent India based on the political philosophy of Chāṇakya which Professor Jacobi describes as "the proud self-consciousness of a great statesman, of the Indian Bismarck." Alexander encountered the resistance of the Brahmanas who were unbending : " But the Europeans in this region had more implacable enemies than the native princes. The power behind the throne was the Brahman community and here for the first time we come upon an opposition inspired by the conception

<sup>26</sup> Zimmer : Altindisches Leben. p. 162. sqq. ; Weber ; Indische Studien, XVII, 88.

<sup>27</sup> Geldner : Vedische Studien, II. 303.

<sup>28</sup> Nirukta II, 10.



of a national religion, the only germ to be found in ancient times of the idea of Indian nationality. It was the 'philosophers' (i.e., the Brahmins) who denounced the princes, if they submitted to the foreigner, and goaded the free tribes into revolt. A city of Brahmins had to be stormed whilst the operations against Samsa were going on.... But it was the day of the Yavana's power.... The Europeans knew who were their worst enemies, and their hand fell heavily upon the Brahmins. They were put to death wholesale; their bodies too were hung up for the kites and vultures by the roads—to the unspeakable horror, we may believe, of the people of the land."<sup>29</sup> The Signet Ring depicts the great King Chandragupta, in pursuance of the Indian tradition of Kingship, as a character who follows with deference the direction of his great teacher and guide the Brahmin Chāṇakya. This was a critical turning point in Indian history. No other principle was possible in order to secure the stability of the new government against the counter offensive of the old regime, internal dissension and external aggression, than that the end justifies the means.<sup>30</sup> Chāṇakya knew that virtue did not matter much in history. He was content to leave this to the Dharma Śāstra; in politics crimes often went unpunished. What he was concerned with was the commission of error, from a political viewpoint; and he concentrated all efforts on preventing error and destroying the very seeds of it. The Artha Śāstra repeatedly refers to errors which proved suicidal for the rulers of states in the past. Chāṇakya's ideal is the good of the state. History had raised and put him in the place of power to serve the State; the individual did not count. Chāṇakya was honest and sincere enough to apply this rigorously to his own case. Also, as a Brāhmin it was his duty to do nothing for the sake of enjoyment. The position at the top was not to be exploited for pleasure, profit or power; instead he held that those who sought the highest place must lead a life of simplicity and self-denial. Thus Chāṇakya was immortalised in Indian tradition not merely for his intellect but as a statesman who founded a political philosophy on the conception of Trivarga, and as a

<sup>29</sup> Cambridge History of India, Vol. I p. 378.

<sup>30</sup> This is forcibly expressed by Dietrich Von Nieheim, Bishop of Verden, thus: "When the existence of the Church is threatened, she is released from the commandments of morality. With unity as the end, the use of every means is sanctified, every cunning, treachery, violence, simony, prison, death. For all order is for the sake of the community, and the individual must be sacrificed to the common good. (De Schismate libri III, 1411 A.C.). The rule that the end justifies the means governs the policy of states ruled by dictators in our own times and is followed by the foreign offices of most other states.

man of high moral character. His authoritarian methods, however, concentrated power in the hands of a few and founded an absolute monarchy depending on an efficient standing army and a well organized secret service.

In the Signet Ring there are allusions to the condition of political prisoners in the Maurya Age as a  
 The Prison. consequence of the Police State founded by Chāṇakya. In the Artha Śāstra, it is laid down that a secret report shall not be held reliable until confirmed by three spies. "When the information thus received from these three different sources is exactly of the same version, it shall be held reliable. If they (the three sources) frequently differ, the spies concerned shall either be punished in secret or dismissed."<sup>31</sup> Thus in Act VI Chandragupta refers to information 'verified variously' (Bahusāh jñātam) regarding concealment by Chandana-dāsa of the family of his colleague. The Artha Śāstra has interesting information about prisons, treatment of convicts by the prison authorities, the duties and powers of prison officials and the like. A chapter is devoted to torture for obtaining confessions. In authoritarian states the forfeiture of life and property is a powerful threat. It facilitates the extortion of political confessions. Confronted with death the mechanism of human thought suffers surprising reactions like the movements of a compass when brought close to the magnetic pole.

The Police State of the early Maurya period was modified considerably during the reign of Chandragupta's  
 Aśoka. grandson Aśoka-vardhana as is abundantly proved by his edicts indelibly cut in rock and inscribed on massive stone pillars. His reign witnessed the growth of civil and religious liberty for which there is a parallel again only in the Gupta Age if we may believe the testimony of Fa-hien. Aśoka appears to have revived the method of the Assembly (Parishad) and encouraged debate and discussion. During his long reign the people enjoyed the blessings of peace. It was a breathing space in Indian history when it was possible for the rulers to withdraw the old harsh measures, and allow fairplay. The 12th Edict of Aśoka, discovered at the foot of the Girnar Hill in Kathiawad and also at Shahbaz-garhi near Peshawar, has been erroneously called the Tolerance Edict. Although in the modern world people have not yet learnt to tolerate the views of others Aśoka had gone much further. He asks not for tolerance but respect for the views of others as the true

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<sup>31</sup> Bk. I, ch. 12.

basis of civil liberty. The Edict is as follows:—"His Sacred Gracious Majesty the King does reverence to men of all sects, whether ascetics or householders, by gifts and various forms of reverence.

His Sacred Majesty, however, cares not so much for gifts or external reverence as that there should be a growth of the essence of the matter in all sects. The growth of the essence of the matter assumes various forms, but the root of it is the restraint of speech, to wit, a man must not do reverence to his own sect or disparage that of another man without reason. Depreciation should be for specific reasons only, because the sects of other people all deserve reverence for one reason or another.

By thus acting, a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people. By acting contrariwise, a man hurts his own sect, and does disservice to the sects of other people. For he who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the splendour of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect.

Concord, therefore, is meritorious, to wit, hearkening and hearkening willingly to the Law of Piety as accepted by other people. For this is the desire of His Sacred Majesty that all sects should hear much teaching and hold sound doctrine. Wherefore, the adherents of all sects, whatever they may be, must be informed that His Sacred Majesty cares not so much for gifts or external reverence as that there should be growth in the essence of the matter and respect for all sects.

For this very purpose are employed the Censors of the Law of Piety, the Censors of the Women, the Inspectors and other official bodies. And this is the fruit thereof—the growth of one's own sect, and the enhancement of the splendour of the Law of Piety." <sup>32</sup>

Local Self-government and autonomous village organization flourished during the Maurya age. Asoka strengthened the Buddhist traditions of the Parishad or Assembly which we find in the administration of villages and towns, caste and trade-guilds, in provinces and even in federations. Jayaswal has collected such details on the rules of elections, division into electoral units, rules of procedure and debate.<sup>33</sup> An erroneous impression has long gained ground that in India the caste system has prevented the growth of democratic institutions. The Panchayat system or representative

<sup>32</sup> Vincent Smith—*Asoka*.

<sup>33</sup> *Hindu Polity*, p. 128.

democracy, which is native to the Indian temperament has survived despite the powerful centralized administration of the British Government in India. Referring to the Parishad the Marquis of Zetland writes "And it may come as a surprise to many to learn that in the Assemblies of the Buddhists in India two thousand years or more ago are to be found the rudiment of our own parliamentary practice of the present day. The dignity of the Assembly was preserved by the appointment of a special officer—the embryo of "Mr. Speaker" in the House of Commons. A second officer was appointed whose duty it was to see that when necessary a quorum was secured—the prototype of the Parliamentary Chief whip in our own system. A member initiating business did so in the form of a motion which was then open to discussion. In some cases this was done once only, in others three times, thus anticipating the practice of Parliament in requiring that a Bill be read a third time before it becomes law. If discussion disclosed a difference of opinion the matter was decided by the vote of the majority, the voting being by ballot."<sup>84</sup>

The rite of Rājyābhisheka literally 'sprinkling for the coronation,' corresponding to the biblical ceremony of "anointing" the king, followed his election. Kalhana humorously describes the election of Yaśaskara one of the early kings of Kashmir "For a long time waxed the proposal, for the disposal of the throne, of those whose beards were singed by smoke and who desired to appoint different persons as king." "Owing to the diversity of opinion among them no one was sprinkled save only their own beards with a lot of their own spittle ejected during their speeches." At last they decided upon the right man. "Thereupon Yaśaskara, who was of mature ability to support the earth, was approached and immediately sprinkled with water by the Brahmans like a mountain by the clouds." Kalhana thus describes the formal rite of coronation of Durlabha-varḍhana aided by the minister Khankha: "Then having undermined the impediments of diversity of opinions of the principal ministers the grateful Khankha performed, in accordance with rite, high on the head of the King's son-in-law, with the waters of the Tirthas released from pitchers of gold, the desired and sacred royal Abhisheka." The Abhisheka of a prince, sitting in a pavilion and the officials pouring water over his head, has been preserved in a wall-painting in Cave I at Ajanta.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Prof. Rawlinson—The Legacy of India (1937), p. XI.

<sup>85</sup> Rājatarāṅgiṇī, V. 462, 463, 477 and III 528; Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Vol. XXVII Part I, 1941 (Ajanta).

In the Signet Ring titles of the king such as *Sārva-bhauma*, *Rājā-dhirāja*, are used. Such titles were assumed by rulers who had subdued their neighbouring kings and were rightly able to proclaim their suzerainty over vast dominions. On the coins of the Indo-Bactrian kings the legend in Greek thus appears: *Basileos Basileon*—King of kings. Later Greek kings had the legend, in *Prākrit* on their coins which was imitated by the Scythians (*Śaka*). The coins of Gondophares have both the Greek and *Prākrit* legend as follows—*Basileus Basileon Megalou Gundophernou* and on the reverse *Mahārājasa Rājarājasa Devatrātasa Gudaphārasa*—of *Gudaphāra*, the great king, king of kings, protected by the gods. These titles were continued by the *Kushānas*. It is interesting to note that these Turkish Kings used the Greek legend, as well as *Prākrit* and Turkish, on their coins. On the coins of the Emperor *Kanishka* we find *Basileos Basileon Kanheshkou*—*Kanishka*, king of kings. The Turkish language in Greek letters appears thus: *Shaonano Shao Kanheshki Kushano*, *Shaonano Shao Huvishki Kushano*—the shah (king) of shahs, *Kanishka* the *Kushana*; of *Huvishka* the *Kushana*. The emblems on the reverse of these coins are figures of deities from the Greek, Persian, Brahmanic pantheon and of the Buddha. Their names appear in Greek characters centuries after Bactrian Greek rule had disappeared from India and Central Asia. Thus we find in the *Kushāna* coins *Salene*, *Helios*, *Hērkeo*, *Mihiro*—*Mihira*, *Mazdohano*—*Mazdaonho*, *Skando*, *Mahaseno*, *Komaro*, *Bizago*—*Viśakha*, *Boddo*—*Buddha* and *Saka Mana Boddo*—*Sākya Muni Buddha*. The *Kushana* title remained in current use for centuries among the Hindu Turks of Kabul who were known as the *Turki Shahiya* dynasty. These kings bore the title of *Shahi na shahi*—King of kings and numerous references to the *Shahis* of Kabul and the Frontier are to be found in *Kalhana's Kashmir chronicle*. In the fourth century the Gupta emperor, *Samudra Gupta*, was in alliance with the king of Afghanistan who is described in his inscription as *Daivaputra Shāhi Shāhānushāhi*. The Hindu Turks were defeated by the Muslim Turks under *Sabaktagin* and finally destroyed by *Mahmud of Ghazni* in the eleventh century.

The Signet Ring throws an interesting light on the powers of ministers. The king is described as an infant at the breast who cannot remain away from his ministers (Act. IV, st. 14). There is abundant evidence in Indian literature of the wide powers of ministers which they apparently exercised by virtue of the authority delegated to them by the king. In Act III, st. 32

The power of  
Ministers.

the minister is compared to the controller (Yantā), while the king is compared to an elephant. This suggests that the minister was the virtual master in political affairs and, as is clear from the stanza, it was the minister who was, in law, solely responsible for the administration. The prose dialogues in Act III and IV also throw light on the respective powers of the king and the ministers and the sharing of responsibility for the heavy burden of government.

The Artha Śāstra mentions among the necessary qualifications of ministers (Amātya-sampat) the following: "Resident of the state, of high family, affable, influential, trained in the arts, possessed of foresight, memory, courage, eloquence and dignity; of pure character; strong, and healthy; and free from qualities which excite hatred and enmity."<sup>36</sup> The business of the council of ministers is described in a separate chapter. The meetings of the council, Mantri-parishad, must be secret and the ministers bound to maintain secrecy. "The King may ask his ministers for their opinion either individually or collectively." "All administrative measures are to be preceded by deliberation in council" and the considered advice of the majority prevailed as also the sense of the council—*yad bhūyishṭhah Kāryasiddhikaram vā bruyuh tat kuryāt*. The opinion of absent members was to be ascertained in writing by sending papers—*Anāsannais saha patra-sampreshapena mantrayet*.<sup>37</sup> The council or Assembly apparently functioned in the provinces of the empire in Aśoka's time for he mentions the Parishad in his Rock Edict VI.

The joint and several consultation with ministers are mentioned in Kāmandaka's work on Political Science in the third century with which Viśākha-datta was no doubt familiar. An echo of this method of consultation is to be found in the Signet Ring, Act IV, st. 8. Malayaketu is very conscious that princes, ordinarily, are mere tools of ministers. In Act II, st. 1, the same idea is more clearly expressed where Viśākha-datta speaks of kings as snakes in the hands of their ministers who are compared to snake charmers. A similar comparison is made by Kalhaṇa in the twelfth century. The kings, descendants of a mighty founder of an empire, managed by ministers, are thus described: "Those whose conscience is in the keeping of their servants resemble snakes captured by snake catchers..."

<sup>36</sup> Bk. I, ch. 9.

<sup>37</sup> Bk. I, ch. 15, Bk. VIII, ch. 1.

"Beshrew the young cobras, born in the line of the Hydryad who supports the globe of the earth, for gladly accepting the food morsel in the cavities of their mouths opened by the snake catchers; the latter do this in order to earn a living by begging through them and not to add to the importance of the snakes whom they compel to jump in and out of the leather bag to frighten the people."<sup>38</sup> Referring to the dialogue between Chāṇakya and Chandragupta in Act III of the Signet Ring, Telang wrote in the notes: "The distinction is, in essence, the same as that between a despotic monarch, a constitutional monarch, and a monarch who reigns but does not govern." To call Chandragupta a constitutional monarch in the modern sense is far fetched. The Signet Ring gives us the picture of absolute monarchy where the ministers were answerable to the king who could dismiss them at his pleasure as in fact Chandragupta does at the end of the feigned quarrel with Chāṇakya. Viśākha-datta was well aware that the worth and significance of the monarchical principle cannot rest in the person of the monarch alone unless by chance the crown is set on the head of a hero or a person of extraordinary ability. Such an event may happen once in several centuries. But the ideal of the monarchy takes precedence of the person of the monarch since the meaning of the institution must lie in the institution itself. Thus the monarch is, according to Indian tradition, in the category of those who must serve in pursuance of his Rāja-dharma. This is clear from the reference to Rāja-dharma in Act III, st. 4, st. 6. If the worth of the monarchical institution were dependent on the person of the monarch himself monarchy could not last. For the servile, the professional lackeys and place hunters who grovel before their lord and bread giver and call themselves "monarchists" would soon prepare the way for its downfall. This is Viśākha-datta's view expressed in Act III, st. 14, st. 16 and Act V, st. 12.

Maurya finds from archaeological excavations, as well as from casual diggings for sewage drains and the like at Patna are lodged in the Patna Museum and include numerous finds from jewellers' shops, terra-cottas and antiquities of Pāṭaliputra. They have also been discovered at Saranath near Benares, Bhita, a prosperous city in olden times, near Allahabad and at Kasrawad, a Buddhist site near the river Narmada in Indore State. The Bhir mound in Taxila has yielded a great deal of Maurya material which has been classified and lodged in the museum at Taxila. Maurya antiquities have also been found at Brahmagiri in Mysore State. In 1940 at Rajghat, near Benares, excavations brought to light

a charming cross-section of life in the holy city during the golden age of the Guptas. The rich and varied material unearthed include about two thousand terra-cotta figurines with beautiful heads and busts of women mostly of the Gupta period. An exquisite plaque has the graceful figure of a woman on a swing suspended from an Asoka tree (A. Jonesia). The figurines give us an idea of the culture of that era with its emphasis on the love of nature, the dance and music. Of especial interest is the style of coiffure of the women which has a striking resemblance to the style favoured by the women of ancient Rome. The dress, of both men and women, consisted of robes and apparently men dressed their hair in as many different ways as the women of today. A number of court seals showing Roman heads and heads of Gupta kings as well as the seals of ministers and private individuals have been found. The Maurya level has not yet been reached. At Ramnagar, at the foot of the Kumaon Hills in the Bareilly district, a systematic excavation under the guidance of the Director General of Archaeology is now in progress. The site is identified with Ahichhatra capital of ancient Panchāl. The walls of the old city rise fifty feet above the plain and its bastions here stood and defied the elements for centuries. The large bricks are 21 to 24 inches long and indicate their early age from hundred to three hundred years B.C. Temples and houses of the Gupta period have so far been exposed. The pottery found has been classified and the findspot has been carefully recorded, following modern methods, for purposes of study. Important discoveries which might help in filling up gaps in ancient Indian history are expected to be made at this site. Bareilly was an important administrative centre of Asoka's empire and the Ramnagar site may possibly yield Maurya antiquities. It may also throw light on the history of the Kumaon Hills.

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## E

### IRANIAN, GREEK AND CHINESE CONTACTS WITH INDIA

The term *Pārasika*, people of Iran (Persia), occurs four times in the *Signet Ring*. In Act I, st. 20 is mentioned the *Pārasika*, "called Megha," lord of an extensive force of cavalry. *Kālidāsa* has also mentioned the *Parasikas* in a remarkable passage dealing with the conquests of Raghu who, after over-running *Aparānta* (Konkan), is said to have proceeded north to conquer the *Pārasikas*. It was Professor Jarl Charpentier's conjecture that the battle between the army of Raghu and the *Pārasikas* must have taken place in the Lower Indus Valley after Raghu had passed through Kathiawad. Raghu, it is related, marched north to the land of the *Hūnas* and the *Kāmbojas*. The passage begins with *Pārasikān tato jetum pratasthe sthala-vartmanā*. "Thereafter he (Raghu) marched by the land route to conquer the *Pārasikas*, just as the self-controlled man conquers, by realization of the essence of knowledge, the enemy called the organs of the senses. 60. . . . In the mighty clash of battle which took place with the people of the west, equipped with cavalry, the adversary was recognizable in the dust only by the twang of the bow. 62. With their bearded heads, which had been removed by the sabre, he covered the ground which thus resembled a honeycomb swarming with bees. 63. The remnant of the foe, after removing their steel helmets, sought his protection; the organised assaults of the mighty can only be averted by surrender. 64. His warriors dispelled the fatigue of the victorious fight by wine, in grape-vine bowers where the ground was spread with fleece adorned with precious stones. 65."<sup>1</sup> Thus *Kālidāsa* describes the *Pārasika* as the people of the west (*Pāschātya*) equipped with cavalry, whose bearded soldiers wore steel armour and fought in the arid desert. After the battle the victorious soldiers of Raghu regaled themselves with wine (*Madhu*), in bowers of the vine (*Drākshāvalaya*), comfortably seated on sheep skins. Whether there was a king of *Ayodhyā* named Raghu and whether he actually achieved *dig-vijaya*, conquests in all the directions, is not known but neither *Kālidāsa* nor *Viśākha-datta* could have possessed accurate knowledge of the remote past and must be alluding to conditions of their own period.

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<sup>1</sup> *Raghu-Vamśa*, IV 60, 62—65. S. P. Pandit's Edition.

The researches of Professor Hersfeld show that the Sassanian Kings of Iran carried on a great campaign against the Śakas, rulers of Scistan, whose empire included the Lower Indus region, Kathiawad, Gujerat and Malwa. The founder of the Sassanian empire of Iran, Ardashir I (225-241 A.C.) commenced the struggle with the Śakas which his great grandson Behram II (276-293 A.C.) extended to India. The Śaka empire extending from eastern Iran to Central India was destroyed by a mighty pincer movement begun by the Sassanians of Iran and completed by the Gupta emperor Chandragupta II Vikramāditya about 388 A.C. After the destruction of the rule of the Śakas in their homelands their viceroys known in India by the Iranian title of Kshatrapa<sup>2</sup> continued for a time to rule as independent sovereigns until their territories were finally absorbed in the Gupta empire. There is reason to believe that the early Sassanian Kings held sway over part of the Indus region.

In Act I, st. 20 are also mentioned the Rajahs of Kulūta, Malaya, Kashmir and Sindh. Kulūta was known to Ptolemy as Kyllindrine, the name of the territory formed by the upper part of the basin of the river Vipāsā (Beas) in the Panjāb. It is mentioned in a list of territories in the Varāha-Samhitā. In the seventh century the Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang visited Kulūta and transcribed its name as K'iu-lu-to. The ancient name survives in the modern Kulu.

Sindhushena is described in Act I, st. 20 as the rajah who is a Saindhava which may mean "belonging to Sindh" or "the Salt Range" in the Panjāb. As, elsewhere Visākha-datta speaks of him as Sindhu-rāja (Act V) he probably refers to Sindh and not the Salt Range. The Indus river is Sindhu in Sanskrit. The name of the frontier river was transferred to the territory adjacent to it and hence the province of Sindh. In the Avestā, Sindhu is called Hindu and also in Old Persian. The Greeks dropped the aspirate and called it Indos from which is derived India. In the U.S.A. the people of India are called Hindu, without distinction of religion and that is the correct meaning of the Old Persian geographical term Hindu. By Malaya is obviously meant some place in northern India which has not been identified. The Rajahs mentioned in this stanza, and elsewhere in the play, are probably not historical figures. We

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<sup>2</sup> From it is derived the English Satrap.

may conclude that at the end of the fourth century Sindh, Panjāb, including the hill region of Kulu, and Kashmir were outside the Gupta empire and that parts of the Indus region were probably within the sphere of Persian rulers who were well known for their excellent cavalry.

In Act II Virādha-gupta refers to the siege of Pāṭaliputra by the forces of Chandragupta aided by the tribes of the Śaka, Yavana, Kāmboja, Pārasika, Bālhika and others. The Vedic<sup>3</sup> references to the Bālhika are interpreted by some scholars to refer to Iranian tribes in Bactria. In the Mahābhārata, Śalaga, King of the Madra territory with its capital at Śākala (Sialkot), is called the lord of the Vālhika and his sister the Mādri is called Vālhiki.<sup>4</sup> The Madra-deśa was the region between the Chenab and the Satlaj. The Greeks mention these Central Asiatic tribes as the Baraca settled in the Panjāb. Tribes of the Bālhikas, settled between the Chenab and the Beas, are believed to have later migrated southwards to the Indus. In the Meherauli Pillar Inscription of Chandra, Circa 400 A.C., it is recorded that after crossing the seven mouths of the Indus he conquered the Bālhikas<sup>5</sup>. Viśākha-datta must have had clear ideas of the Bālhikas as well as of the Śakas who were conquered by the great King Chandra-Gupta II.

This is one of many Sanskrit words borrowed from the Persian. The Old Persians called the Greeks Yavana. Aśoka uses the Pali form Yona. Geiger identified Alasandā, mentioned in the Mahavamso, with Alexandria founded by the Macedonian conqueror near Kabul, and the Yona country referred to in the Pali chronicle as Western Afghanistan. In Aśoka's Rock Edict V the Yavanas must mean Greek colonists who were the subjects of the Maurya empire since the annexation of Afghanistan by Chandragupta. In North India Yavana meant the Greeks, who came through Afghanistan, including the later Bactrian Greeks. In course of time, the term was applied loosely to the people of Afghanistan. In South India it was used for Greeks, and merchants of Alexandria in Egypt, who traded at the ports of south-western India.

By the Kāmbojas were meant the people of northern and eastern Afghanistan. In literature they are often referred to for their fine breed of horses. Afghanistan has always been historically part

<sup>3</sup> Atharva Veda, V. 5, 7, 9, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Adi Parva CXIII, 4425-40, LXVII, 2642; for Madri CXXV, 4886.

<sup>5</sup> Tīrtvā septa mukhāni yena samare sindhor jītā Bālhikāh.

of India and its culture and civilization have been as much Indian as those of Kashmir. In Pāṇini's Grammar the usage and idiom of the Sanskrit spoken by the Kāmbojas are given as illustrations. In Afghanistan the hymns of the Rig Veda were composed. It is the holy land of the rivers Kubhā (Kabul) Krumu (Kurram) and the Gomatī (Gomal) mentioned in the Rig Veda.<sup>6</sup> Some of the famous grammarians, scholars, authors and thinkers who have influenced the philosophy, literature and thought of India through the Sanskrit language and through the ancient Pashto, were residents of eastern Afghanistan and the Kabul River Valley. The region mentioned in the Avestan Vendidad as Hapta Hindu, identical with the Sapta Sindhavas of the Rig Veda, included Afghanistan in the west and the Panjāb to the east as far as the Satlaj. The region of Kandahar, known to the Greeks as Arachosia, is mentioned in the Avesta as Harahvaiti.<sup>7</sup> This was the region of the Sarasvatī. The memory of it still survives in India in the legend of the lost river Sarasvatī.

The ancient Iranians and the Indo Aryans were descended from common ancestors. The hymns of the Vedic Iran and India. Aryans, while their home was in Eastern Afghanistan, closely resemble the Iranian hymns of the Avesta not merely in thought but in language. A few examples will illustrate this :—

1 Stanza.

Avestan	..	..	..	Vedic equivalent.
Tat thvā	..	..	..	Tat tvā.
Ahurā	..	..	..	Vach Asura.
Tā chit	..	..	..	Tā chit.
Mazdā	..	..	..	Medhishṭha.
Vaśmī	..	..	..	Vashmi.
Anyāchā	..	..	..	Anyāchā.
Vīdye	..	..	..	Vide.

2 gods.

Avestan	..	..	..	Vedic.
Indra	..	..	..	Indra.
Vāyu	..	..	..	Vāyu.
Mithra	..	..	..	Mitra.
Nāonhaithya	..	..	..	Nāsatya.
Verethraghna	..	..	..	Vṛitraghna.

<sup>6</sup> Macdonell and Keith, Vedic Index, I, 162, 144, 238.

<sup>7</sup> Mentioned in the Old Persian Inscriptions as Harahuvati.

The close resemblance between the old Iranian and Sanskrit may be traced not merely in myths and legends but in the roots of the two languages and in their grammar. According to Dr. Giles "Not only single words and phrases but even whole stanzas may be transliterated from the dialects of Iran into the dialects of India without change of vocabulary or constructions."<sup>8</sup> Modern provincial languages especially in northern and western India have been deeply influenced for centuries by the language of Iran during the Achaemenian, Scythian, Parthian, Kushana and Sassanian periods and subsequently during the Mughal period when once again the Iranian language became, for a time, the language of administration in India.

From the sixth century B.C. we have an accurate historical account of political contacts of Iran with the north-west of India. The earliest historical record of a great empire under one dynastic rule is that of Cyrus the Great of Persia. According to a Persian tradition preserved by Ktesias, a Greek physician at the Court of the Persian King Artaxerxes (401 B.C.), Cyrus died of a wound received in battle from an Indian "when the Indians were fighting on the side of the Derbikes and supplied them with elephants." It is believed that Cyrus had subdued the tribes of the Hindu Kush though it was not until the time of Darius I<sup>9</sup> that the Persians came as far as the Indus. The conquest by the Persians of the Indus region is believed to have taken place in 518 B.C. That Persian rule continued in India during the reign of his successor Xerxes is proved by the existence of a large Indian contingent which that king recruited in India for his expeditionary forces against Greece. Herodotus thus describes the Indian infantry: "The Indians clad in garments of cotton, carried bows of cane and arrows of cane, the latter tipped with iron; and thus accoutred the Indians were marshalled under the command of Pharnazathres, son of Artabates." Thus the Indians fought under Persian commanders. Regarding the Indian cavalry Herodotus writes that they were "armed with the same equipment as in the case of the infantry, but they brought riding horses and chariots, the latter being drawn by horses and wild asses."<sup>10</sup> In the next century the tables were turned when Persia was invaded by Alexander the Great. Darius III, last King of the Achaemenian dynasty, who in 330 B.C. tried to oppose Alexander,

<sup>8</sup> Cambridge History of India, Vol. I p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> 522—486 B.C.

<sup>10</sup> Herodotus. VII, 85-86.

issued a call for troops to his satrapies. Arrian<sup>11</sup> relates that the eastern satraps sent Indians, Bactrians and Sogdians, who fought under the command of the Bactrian satrap, while the "mountainous Indians" followed the satrap of Arachosia, and that a force of elephants "belonging to the Indians who lived this side of the Indus," formed part of the reinforcements which supported the Persians during their final stand at Arbela against Alexander. Alexander, it is said, advanced as far as the Hyphasis, (Beas) in the Panjāb which was the eastern boundary of the Persian domain which he had already conquered. Dr. D. B. Spooner, who excavated the site of ancient Pāṭaliputra, believed that Persian rule in India during the Achaemenian period was widespread. His articles on this subject which have been published are entitled *The Zoroastrian Period of Indian History*.

In the Mahābhārata there are references to the Magi which go back to a period earlier than the Zoroastrian  
 The Magians. in Iran. In Act I, st. 20 the Persian is called Megha a name which the dramatist probably chose arbitrarily. In old Sanskrit Maga meant a Magian. The Magians (L. Magi, Gk. Magos, Sk. Maga) are mentioned in the Puranas (Kūrma Purāṇa XLVIII, 36) and in the Mahābhārata (Bhīṣma Parva). According to Herodotus (I, 101) the Magi were one of the six tribes of the Medes. They were, it would appear, the indigenous people of Iran when the Aryans arrived as immigrant conquerors and eventually they became the priests of the Zoroastrian Aryans among whom they introduced two of their own ancient customs : (1) Dakhmas : Tower of Silence where the bodies of the dead were exposed until the vultures had stripped them bare (2) Marriage between the closest of kin as a religious duty of great sanctity.<sup>12</sup> With this account the description of the Magas given in the seventh canto of the Bhīṣma-parva bears a close resemblance.

Bhārundā nāma śakunāḥ  
 Tikṣhṇa-tundāḥ mahābalāḥ  
 Tān niharanti mṛitān  
 Darīśu prakṣhipanti cha.

Birds known as vultures, with ferocious beaks and of great strength, devour them when dead ; and their skeletons are thrown in deep caverns.

Mithunam jāyate kāle  
 Samam tat cha pravartate.

<sup>11</sup> Anan. III, 8, 3-6.

<sup>12</sup> Prof. Moulton ; Religious Poetry of Persia, pp. 75-77.

Those who are bred together, in course of time wed.<sup>13</sup> The Mahābhārata ascribes these two customs to the land of the Uttara-Kuru. The Magas were known to the Indians as the priests of the Śakas (Scythians) and not as priests of the Zoroastrian, a rank which they apparently acquired later. The Magas migrated to India with the Śakas. The Maga colonists might have arrived also with the Medas, for the Brihat-Samhitā mentions the Medas (Medos) in India. In course of time the Magas became priests also of the Indians and came to be known as Maga Brahmanas. Yet their origin is still remembered as the Śakadvipiya Maga Brahmanas; they do not enjoy the privileged position of the high class Brahman. The Maga Brahmanas are sometimes found as priests in Jaina temples and in temples dedicated to the images of dead kings. In Bengal the Śakadvipi Brahmanas are astrologers while in Bihar they are physicians following the Ayur-Vedic system of medicine. Sun-worship is still common among them. Alberuni in the beginning of the eleventh century has mentioned the famous Sun-temple of Multan (Sk. Mulasthāna) where the priests were the Maga.<sup>14</sup> "In former times, Khorasan, Persis, Irak, Mosul, the country upto the frontier of Syria, was Buddhistic, but then Zarathushtra went forth from Adharbaijan and preached Magism in Balkh (Bactra). His doctrine came into favour with King Gushtasp, and his son Isfendiyad spread the new faith both in east and west, both by force and by treaties. He founded fire-temples through his whole empire. The succeeding kings made their religion (i.e., Zoroastrianism) the obligatory state religion of Persis and Irak. In consequence, the Buddhists were banished from those countries, and had to emigrate to the countries east of Balkh. There are some Magians upto the present time in India, where they are called Maga."<sup>15</sup> The sacred books of the Maga in course of time were written in Sanskrit though they are full of Iranian words, and the Magas were finally recognized as Brahmanas.

The drinking of wine in public places of entertainment is referred to in Act VI, st. 2. Both Siddhārthaka and Samiddhārthaka are described as Rājapurusha or King's liegemen. The suffix Ka at the end of their names is a diminutive; it is current among retainers of Indian princes known as the Khawas. The Artha Śāstra contains regulations for a system of excise licenses, special

<sup>13</sup> Vide also Bhishma Parva Chap. XI, 36-37.

<sup>14</sup> Vol. I, p. 121. The Sun-temple of Multan was destroyed by Aurangzeb.

<sup>15</sup> Vol. I, p. 21.

duties being levied on imported liquor, including wines from Kapiśā (Kabul). "Liquor shops shall consist of many comfortable rooms furnished with sofas and seats. The drink houses shall possess such comforts as the changing seasons require always having garlands of flowers, scents and perfume."<sup>16</sup> In the same chapter the duties of the superintendent of liquor shops, rules regarding the manufacture, sale and control of liquor are given. Different kinds of wine are discussed and it is mentioned that they were perfumed with flowers. The drinking of wine has generally been associated in India with eating meat. Kalhaṇa thus describes the army officers in Kashmir while on a campaign who dined sumptuously: "Those who were in the Chamberlain's milieu enjoying fried meats and drinking delightful light wine, cooled with ice and perfumed with flowers, said 'soon we shall bring in Sujji dragging him by his beard in battle'; in such wise, with all sorts of boasts they declared their self-assurance."<sup>17</sup> Meat is an ancient favourite food in India among the well-to-do classes. In the Mahābhārata the owner of a meat shop, which is surrounded by crowds, is described as doing excellent business; and he complacently boasts that he sells meat but does not himself kill.<sup>18</sup> The Kashmir Brahmans are *bons viveurs*; meat and fish for those who can afford, are a part of their daily food. In ancient times the use of grape wine was common among them for ceremonial purposes.<sup>19</sup> The Soma drink in use among the Vedic Brahmans was known among their contemporaries in Iran as Haoma, and the Parsis in India still import from Iran a plant for the Haoma rite.<sup>20</sup> Viśākha-datta has thus correctly described the Maurya age. According to Megasthenes "the King's food was prepared by women who also served him with wine which is much used by all Indians." Ktesias tells us that in India the King was not permitted to get drunk while indulging in wine though the Persian King was allowed to get drunk on one particular day on which sacrifice to Mithra was offered. Excessive indulgence in drinking, gambling, hunting and sensuality is condemned in the epics, and excess in this fourfold vice is also condemned in Book VIII chapter 3 of the Artha Śāstra; a condemnation which is echoed in the Signet Ring in Act III in Chāṇakya's dialogue with Chandragupta where he criticizes the superintendents of elephants and cavalry.

<sup>16</sup> Book II, ch. 25. Pāṇini mentions Śuṇḍikā, brewery (IV, 3, 76) and Āsuti, distillery (V, 2, 112).

<sup>17</sup> Rājataranginī VIII, 1866-67.

<sup>18</sup> III, 207.

<sup>19</sup> Nilamata Purāṇa, verses 523-523; Rājataranginī, VI, 10.

<sup>20</sup> Macdonell—History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 140.



The Greeks have left us a detailed description of the Indian army and its equipment. Each horseman carried two lances, resembling the kind called *Saunia* by the Greeks, and a buckler. The infantry was armed with a broad sword and long buckler of ox hide. In addition each man carried javelins or a bow. The bow is described as being "made of equal length with a man who bears it. This they rest upon the ground, and pressing against it with their left foot thus discharge the arrow having drawn the string backwards; for the shaft they use is little short of being three yards long, and there is nothing which can resist an Indian archer's shot—neither shield nor breast plate nor any stronger defence, if such there be."<sup>21</sup> The early Greek accounts may be supplemented by a mass of contemporary evidence and sculptured bas-reliefs from the third century B.C. down to the period of the later Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian kings. The coins of these kings afford interesting illustrations of the arms of the period, of their costumes, head dress and coiffeur. The Indo-Scythian kings are represented as wearing coats of chain mail with a short sword sheathed by their side, and a lance. The sculpture of Sanchi accurately represents the early Indian arms. "In one of them," says General Cunningham, "there is the representation of a siege probably undertaken to recover possession of some holy relic. The soldiers wear a tight fitting dress and kilt; the arms are swords, bows and arrows. The swords are short and broad, and tally exactly with the description of Megasthenes." The bas-reliefs represent nearly all the soldiers as archers. The arms represented on the Stūpas at Bhilsa are bows, arrows, dagger, sword, battle axe, trident, infantry and cavalry shields, and similar accurate representation of military accoutrements is also found on the Stūpas at Udayagiri. The ancient Romans and the Greeks depended on the lance rather than the sword. The Indian sword and defensive armour were so famous for their strength and beauty that in Firdausi's *Shahnameh* the legendary heroes of ancient Iran are described as wearing the arms imported from Kanauj in India. Alexander found the Indian weapons of such fine workmanship that he re-equipped his troops with them. References to the sword, the bow and mail armour may be found in the Signet Ring in Act II, st. 8, Act VI, st. 9, st. 19 and elsewhere. It is worth noting that Rākshasa carries a sword and so does Chāṇakya who sallies

<sup>21</sup> Arrian, *Indica* XVI. Archery in India is very ancient. The arrow was discharged after the string was pulled upto the ear. In the Rig Veda the arrow is called *Karna-yoni*, having the ear for its origin (II, 24, 8).

forth with a picked force to mop up the invaders after the capture of Malayaketu. Both are Brahmans. Indeed in the epics the Brahmans are teachers of archery to the sons of warrior kings, and also generals in war. The fighting traditions among Brahmans has survived to our own times. Some of the best generals during the Maratha period were Brahmans whose descendants are to this day ruling princes in Maharashtra.

The ancient method of Dharma-yuddha, or the righteous way in warfare, is laid down in the Mahābhārata. Method of war-fare. The king accordingly must adhere to righteous behaviour even in war. He must not permit the use of poisoned arrows, or concealed weapons, or slaying of those who are asleep or are suppliants or fugitives. As a victor he must not destroy fine architecture, or exterminate the family of the vanquished, or annex his territory, but he should invest a suitable prince of the defeated family with royal dignity.<sup>22</sup> The early idealism of the epic period appears to have been modified by the views on warfare and politics of the various predecessors of the author of the Artha Śāstra whose names are mentioned. By the time the Artha Śāstra was written the view that a total war was sometimes necessary came to be recognized and the method of power politics was resorted to for gaining diplomatic successes. Thus we find in the Artha Śāstra the view that "there can be no greater evil for princes than an alliance with a king of considerable power, unless one is actually attacked by one's enemy."<sup>23</sup> . . . . . "for it is power that brings about peace between any two kings, no piece of iron that is not made red hot will combine with another piece of iron."<sup>24</sup> For this purpose three requirements are laid down, viz., morale, military power and diplomatic skill; "he who possesses more of the quality mentioned later than the one mentioned first in the order of enumeration will be successful in over-reaching others."<sup>25</sup> Regarding the necessity of war, we have, among others, the following: "My teacher says that in open warfare both sides suffer by sustaining a heavy loss of men and money; and that even a king who wins a victory will appear as defeated in consequence of the loss of men and money. No, says Kautilya, even at considerable loss of men and money, the destruction of an enemy is desirable."<sup>26</sup> As regards its total nature, we are told "when a people resist the attempt of the conqueror, then he may

<sup>22</sup> XII, 100, 5.

<sup>23</sup> and <sup>24</sup> Dr. R. Shamasastry's Translation pp. 321, 322.

<sup>25</sup> and <sup>26</sup> Dr. R. Shamasastry's Translation pp. 396 and 358-9, respectively.

destroy their stores, crops, granaries and trade."<sup>27</sup> The methods of warfare described in the *Artha Śāstra* are interesting. Weapons, apparatus and machines (*Yantra*) included "such weapons as can destroy a hundred persons at once (*śatāghni*) and explosives (*Agni-samyoga*)."<sup>28</sup> Training of troops included trench warfare (*Khanaka-yuddha*), aerial warfare (*Ākāsa-yuddha*) and the commander was expected "to sow dissension in an enemy's army of united mind."<sup>29</sup> And despatch of information was to be expedited "by flying pigeons of the royal household bearing the official mark (*Mudrā*)."<sup>30</sup> Arms and all war equipment, it is stated, shall be stored in underground passages (*Kulyā*).<sup>31</sup> *Chāṇakya* is thoroughly realistic. His work, written not for the passing hour but for the future, embodies a new *Weltanschauung*, a world approach, in which nothing is left to chance. It is the function of the ministers, in considering the welfare of the state in relation to the enemy, "to start the work that is not yet begun, to complete what has been begun, to improve what has been accomplished, and to enforce strict obedience to orders. (*Niyoga-sampadam*)."<sup>32</sup> In this view of a carefully planned state there is no room for dependence on the stars. *Chāṇakya* condemns the foolish man who consults the stars. "Material prosperity will pass by the childish person who overmuch consults the constellations; for the constellation of material prosperity is material prosperity itself. What then can the stars avail? Capable men achieve their ends even after a hundred attempts. Political ends are met by political ends as are elephants by counter elephants." This view is echoed in *Chāṇakya's* reply to *Chandragupta* in Act III of the *Signet Ring*.

The Huns advancing from the Oxus entered Iran and India, through Afghanistan, in the fifth century. They destroyed the last vestige of the *Kushāna* power, sacked and plundered the cities of India, and, though at first repelled by the Gupta emperors, eventually succeeded in giving a mortal blow to the empire, just as the Iranians under *Nadir Shah* in the fourth decade of the eighteenth century destroyed the prestige and power of the *Mughal* empire by the sack of *Delhi*. The Huns for a time founded kingdoms in India and were converted to the Indian religion. In their zeal, as devout worshippers of *Śiva*, they persecuted the Buddhists in Afghanistan and North India. The Huns were eventually defeated with great slaughter in Central India by a

<sup>27</sup>, <sup>28</sup>, <sup>29</sup>, <sup>30</sup>, <sup>31</sup> and <sup>32</sup> Dr. R. Shamasastry's Translation pp. 467, 57, 171, 172, 57 and 30, respectively.

confederacy of Indian rajahs led by Yaśovarman, and were finally driven back to the Oxus in the first quarter of the seventh century by Śrī Harsha-Vardhana, of whom we have an authentic account in the pages of Hsuan Tsang who was honourably received by that great king.

Surāshṭra (Kathiawad) is mentioned with Kāmboja in the Artha Śāstra as the land of Kshatriya republican tribes (Śreni) who depend for their living on trade (Vārtā) and the profession of arms (Śāstra). The ancient word Surāshṭra survives in Sorath as a name of a sub-division of the peninsula of Kathiawad which acquired the new appellation as the 'land of the Kathis' from the Marathas who found this warlike people their bitter opponents in the country. The Kathis with their republican tendencies, their fine breed of Scytho-Turkish horses brought with them from the pastures of the Oxus, the physique, bearing and handsome appearance of their men and women, are strikingly similar to the people of the Indian frontier. Their adoration of the Sun survives. Kathi names are still common in the Indian frontier where, despite conversion to the religion of Arabia, the old names, tribal customs, and costumes continue in the villages.<sup>33</sup> The Kathis are also found in the Panjāb where with the Jats they form the remnants of the ancient ruling clans of the Scythians. After the extinction of Scythian rule in Surāshṭra by Chandra-Gupta II, we find from an inscription, at Junagarh, of the emperor Skanda-Gupta that one Parnadatta was appointed by that emperor as his governor of the province. Professor Jarl Charpentier thought this to be an Iranian name found in Greek transcript as Parnadates, and that the appointment of "a person of undoubted Iranian descent" was some evidence of former Iranian rule in Kathiawad. This conclusion appears to be far fetched. Assuming Parnadatta to be the Sanskrit for Parnadates it is more likely to be the name of a person of Scythian (Turco-Iranian) rather than Iranian descent in Kathiawad in the fifth century. It would be erroneous to infer the race of a person merely from the name. In an inscription of Rudradāman dated about 58 B.C., also found at Junagarh in Kathiawad, it is mentioned that Tushāspa, a Yavana-rāja, Greek prince, was the governor of Kathiawad on behalf of the Maurya emperor Aśoka. Tushāspa sounds more like an Iranian than

<sup>33</sup> Major Wilberforce Bell; History of Kathiawad. The dress of the Pathans survives unchanged from the early centuries of the Christian era as is proved by Gandharan statuary; the Lahore Museum has several statues. The tribal dress of Kathiawad as well as the turban are strikingly similar.

a Greek name. In the time of Aśoka, however, Iran was under Greek rule and some leading Iranians were, it is possible, of Greek descent.

The Turks and Iranians have, from time immemorial, by a process of transition passed from the Turanian and Iranian civilization to the civilization and culture of the Aryan races of India. They brought with them to India the religion which, for the time being, prevailed in Iran. After the conquest of Iran by the Arabs, and its conversion to the Arabian religion, the new faith spread to the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan and Central Asia like the religion of the prophet Zoroaster in the past. The Arabian religion spread in the north-west of India through the medium of the language of Iran like Christianity in the Roman empire through the medium of Greek. The pioneers of the new Arabian faith in India were Turks under the cultural influence of Iran. They were zealous in the cause of the new faith as their forefathers were in the cause of Sun-worship and of Buddhism. Thus in the seventh century Sahityagin the Sun-worshipper, king of the Western Turks, had advanced upto the Indus and been repelled by the king of Kashmir. The later conquests of the Mahomadan Turks in northern India was a repetition of the historic process, viz., the usurpation of the rule and territory of the earlier emigrés by subsequent invaders from Central Asia. The Arabian faith, like its predecessors, became one of the faiths of the people of India and the historic process of its assimilation has been repeated. According to Vincent Smith: "The foreigners like their fore-runners the Śakas and Yueh-chi, universally yielded to the wonderful assimilative power of Hinduism, and rapidly became Hinduised. Clans or families which succeeded in winning chieftainship were admitted readily into the frame of Hindu polity as Kshatriyas or Rajputs, and there is no doubt that the Parihars and many other famous Rajput clans of the north were developed out of the barbarian hordes which poured into India during the fifth and sixth centuries. The rank and file of the strangers became Gujars and other castes ranking lower than the Rajputs in the scale of precedence. Further to the south various indigenous or 'aboriginal' tribes and clans underwent the same process of Hinduised social promotion, in virtue of which Gonds, Bhars, Kharwars and so forth emerged as Chandels, Rathors, Gaharwars, and other well-known Rajput clans, duly equipped with pedigrees reaching back to the sun and moon,"<sup>34</sup> This view is confirmed by Dodwell who writes that the religion of

<sup>34</sup> Early History of India, 3rd Ed., p. 322.

India is "infinitely absorbent like the ocean." "Fierce and warlike tribes, again and again, invaded its northern plains, overthrew its princes, captured and laid waste its cities, set up new states and built new capitals of their own and then vanished into the great tide of humanity, leaving to their descendants nothing but a swiftly diluted strain of alien blood and a few shreds of alien custom that were soon transformed into something cognate with their overmastering surroundings."<sup>35</sup> The Turco-Mongol emperor Akbar married the Rajput princess of Jodhpur and her son, Jahangir, who succeeded to the throne inherited the Rajputs' love for the flesh of the wild boar and for strong drink. His son by a Rajput princess was Shah Jehan, the builder of the Taj Mahal. Shah Jehan's eldest son Dara Shikoh, whose mother was a Rajput princess, took delight in the companionship of Hindu scholars and philosophers and had the Upanishads translated into Persian from Sanskrit. Akbar like his predecessor the Turco-Mongol Kanislika encouraged the fellowship of all faiths. He declared *Sulah-kul*, universal peace and tolerance, in the empire. His friend and biographer, who had migrated to India, the learned Abul-Fazl, an Internationalist, supported him. In his brief autobiographical sketch at the end of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, Abul-Fazl thus speaks of his own early days "I passed the nights in lonely spots with the seekers after truth and enjoyed the society of such as are empty handed but rich in mind and heart. My heart felt itself drawn to the sages of Mongolia or to the hermits of Lebanon; I longed for interviews with the Lamas of Tibet or with the Padres of Portugal; I would gladly sit with the priests of the Parsis and the learned of the Zendavestha. I was sick of the learning of my own land," Pere du Jarric, who visited the court of Akbar, has left us an account of this Mughal emperor who, under Indian influences, was so greatly transformed as to prefer vegetarian food to meat.<sup>36</sup> This is confirmed by Abul-Fazl "His Majesty abstains much from flesh, so that whole months pass away without his touching any animal food, which though prized by most, is nothing thought of by the sage."<sup>37</sup> Abul-Fazl adds: "It is indeed from ignorance and cruelty that although various kinds of food are obtainable men are bent upon injuring living creatures and are lending a ready hand in killing and eating them; none seems to have any eye for the beauty inherent in the prevention of cruelty but makes himself a tomb for animals."

<sup>35</sup> Dodwell: India (1936) Vol. I., p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Akbar "ate sparingly, taking flesh only during three or four months of the year, his diet at other times consisting of milk, rice and sweetmeat." Pere du Jarric p. 206.

<sup>37</sup> Blochmann-Ain-i-Akbari, Vol. I, p. 155.

Dr. Jolly thought that the Artha Śāstra could not belong to the last quarter of the fourth century B.C., among other reasons, because "of the term *surunga* or *suranga* 'a mine' which is probably derived from *Syrinx*, a Greek Hellenistic word often occurring in the description of a siege in Polybius and Diodorus."<sup>39</sup> Assuming that the Sanskrit word *Surangā* for a tunnel was borrowed from Greek it would be erroneous to assume that the Greeks had no knowledge of mining before the time of Alexander the Great, or that the Indians borrowed the word during, or after, the invasions of Alexander. Indian contacts with Greece date from a much earlier period when both Greece and the north-west of India were parts of the Achæmenian empire of Iran which extended from the Mediterranean to the Indus. Darius I of Iran sent a Greek sea-captain named Scylax, about 517 B.C., to explore the course of the Indus. In the war of the Emperor Xerxes Indians fought side by side with the Persians in Greece: "The presence of a large body of Indian troops in the Persian army in Greece in 480 B.C. shows how far the Indian connections were carried; and the discovery of modelled heads of the Indians at Memphis, of about the fifth century B.C., shows that Indians were living there for trade. Hence there is no difficulty in regarding India as the source of the entirely new ideal of asceticism in the West."<sup>41</sup> We learn from a tradition preserved in Greece by Eusebius that some learned Indians actually visited Athens and conversed with Socrates. The traditional statement is recorded of Aristoxenus, a pupil of Plato. "Aristoxenus the musician tells the following story about the Indians. One of these men met Socrates at Athens, and asked him what was the scope of his philosophy. 'An enquiry into human phenomena' replied Socrates. At this the Indian laughed. "How can we enquire into human phenomena," he exclaimed, "when we are ignorant of divine ones."<sup>42</sup> The date of Aristoxenus is 330 B.C. The influence of India on Greek culture and philosophy is traced by Sir S. Radhakrishnan, who has shown that mysticism which was ancient in India when Greek civilization was in its infancy reappears in a certain strain of Greek thought. It is noticeable in the Greek mystery cults, especially the Orphic religion which shares with Hinduism the beliefs in rebirth, immortality, the godlike

<sup>39</sup> Jolly: *Artha Śāstra* Vol. I, p. 34.

<sup>40</sup> The squadron embarked from some place in the upper course on the Indus, made its way to the Indian ocean and reached Egypt in two and a half years.

<sup>41</sup> Sir Flanders Petrie: *Egypt and Israel* (1923) p. 134.

<sup>42</sup> *Præparatio Evangelica*, XI-3.

character of the soul, the bondage of the soul in the body and the possibility of release by purification. It comes into the full philosophic daylight with Plato who owes much to the Orphic teacher Pythagoras. According to Professor Rawlinson Pythagoras derived his ideas from Indian philosophy. "It is more likely that Pythagoras was influenced by India than by Egypt. Almost all the theories, religious, philosophical and mathematical taught by the Pythagoreans, were known in India in the sixth century B.C. and the Pythagoreans, like the Jains and the Buddhists, refrained from the destruction of life and eating meat and regarded certain vegetables such as beans as taboo."<sup>43</sup> During the second Persian invasion (342-332 B.C.) the Scythians and Indians were the western and eastern branches of the Persian army they fought on the side of the Persians in Egypt and were responsible for the great slaughter of their opponents. War on large scale was waged in Asia and the building of fortresses and their reduction by siege were well known centuries before Alexander. A theory based on a single word like *Syrinx*<sup>44</sup> is thus as untenable as the theory of the old Indian drama said to be derived from Greece on the basis of the word *Yavanikā* or *Javanikā*, the Greek curtain. Professor Maodonell disposed off this theory of Weber by showing that the latter had admitted that there was no internal connection between the Indian and the Greek drama, and further that it was uncertain that the Greeks had any curtain at all!

According to Professor Tarn, Alexander "was the pioneer of one of the supreme revolutions in the world's outlook, the first man known to us who contemplated the brotherhood of man or the unity of mankind." Diodorus has given us the contents of Alexander's will. It deals, among other things, with the transplanting of men and women both from Asia to Europe and from Europe to Asia, the encouragement of inter-marriage to produce oneness of spirit (homonoia) and friendship that springs from family ties. Alexander married a Persian princess and encouraged the members of his entourage to marry in Asia and, no doubt, his example had its effect. His army consisted of Thracians and other Balkan tribes, besides the Greeks and Macedonians, and his officers were men from Crete, Cyprus and other islands who belonged to mixed races. There seems, therefore, nothing incredible in the account of the Greek writers that the peace between Seleucus Nikator and Chandragupta

<sup>43</sup> *Legacy of India*, (1937) p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> Prof. Dikshitar derives *Surunga* from Tamil. *The Mauryan Polity* p. 16.



was sealed by a marriage alliance. The Artha Śāstra recognizes the method of appeasing a hostile and powerful king "by giving a daughter in marriage"<sup>45</sup> . . . "for a princess when taken as a hostage, causes trouble to the receiver, while a prince is of reverse nature."<sup>46</sup> And above all "Any kind of marriage is approvable, provided it pleases all those that are concerned in it."<sup>47</sup> The intercourse of the Mauryas with the Greeks appears to have been closely maintained, for it is recorded that the successor of Chandra-gupta, Amitrochates, reinforced the armies of Antiochus, son of Seleucus, and of Antigonos the Great, with elephants in their wars with the Persians. The Greek account relates that King Amitrochates<sup>48</sup> of Pāṭaliputra wrote to Antiochus asking the latter to buy and send him sweet wine, dried figs and a sophist; and that Antiochus replied "We shall send you the figs and wine, but in Greece the laws forbid a sophist to be sold."<sup>49</sup> During the reign of Aśoka the relations of the Mauryas with their neighbours the Greek Kings were very friendly as we know from the edicts and inscriptions of that Emperor.

Upon the decline of the Maurya empire the Bactrian Greeks occupied Afghanistan, the Valley of the Kabul River and Gandhāra. This period of Greek rule is unconnected with the successors of Alexander who failed to get a foothold in India. The rule of the later Greeks in Bactria and India lasted for about, two hundred years when it was ended by the invasion of the Śakas who had settled in the Parthian (Pahalava) province of Seistan and had freely inter-married with the Parthians. The invaders, the Śaka-Pahalava, overran Arachosia (Kandahar) and thence passed across the Indus to the conquest of the Panjāb. It was during the Śaka-Pahalava regime that the traveller Apollonius of Tyana is said to have visited the north-west of India. According to his biographer, Philostratus, the king who then ruled in Taxila was named Phraotes who held undisputed sway over Gandhāra and who was independent of Vardanes the Parthian King of Babylon. Apollonius tells us that Taxila was of the same size as Nineveh, fortified like the cities of Greece on a symmetrical plan. The streets were narrow and irregular like those of Athens and the houses had the appearance of being one storied but had in fact underground basement rooms. The city had a temple of the Sun; and the royal palace which was characterised

<sup>45</sup>, <sup>46</sup> and <sup>47</sup> Dr. Shamasastri's Translation pp. 361, 369 and 187, respectively.

<sup>48</sup> Sk. Amitraghāta, probably the title of Bindusāra, son of Chandra-gupta Maurya.

<sup>49</sup> Athenæus XIV, 67; McCrindle, *Ancient India*, p. 409.

by simplicity and lack of ostentation was a contrast to the splendour of the court of Babylon. The Parthian Chief, Vonones, established himself in Arachosia, while the Saka Maues conquered Taxila. Maues followed the Iranian system of administration by satraps, which had long prevailed in the Panjab. It was continued and extended by his successors. Later Arachosia and Taxila were united under the Parthian Gondophares, the fame of whose power spread to the Western world and who figures in early Christian writings. He having overthrown Hermæus, last king of the Indo-Greeks who after the loss of Kabul were wedged in the Kabul valley, finally annexed the Kabul valley. The Indo-Parthians were in turn, overthrown by the powerful Kushāna chief Kajula Kadphises. This historical process which had occurred before was repeated when the Muslim Turks under Sabaktagin operating from Arachosia first seized, from the Hindu Turks, Kabul and parts of the Panjāb, and finally annexed the Kabul valley on the extinction of the rule of the Turki Shāhi dynasty in the eleventh century.

The Greeks in Afghanistan and the Kabul valley were converted to Buddhism. From the fusion of Indo-Greek culture resulted the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra. The Gandharans were taught by the Greeks to work in stone. The Greeks gave an impetus to Indian art by creating an image of Buddha of whom, until their arrival, there had never been any representation as being contrary to the philosophic conceptions of Buddhism. They made a statue of Buddha in the shape of a radiant and youthful Apollo draped in peplum. Greek plastic art, inspired by the philosophic ideals of India, created an image of Buddha as a symbol of Faith and Love, inducing contemplation and soothing dreams of the Infinite—which has ever since dominated Asia. It was in the crucible of Gandhāra that this new art was born and developed, and it was from there that Buddhism, reacting to Greek and Iranian influences, passed it on to China, Korea and Japan thus forming a link between all the civilizations of the ancient world.

Like Menander and the Indo-Greeks, their successors the Indo-Scythians also became converts to the religion of India. The most famous of the Indo-Scythian Kings was Kanishka, the Clovis of Buddhist Afghanistan. The empire of the Kushānas merits special mention on account of its peculiar religious attitude which we may gather from the coins of its kings, particularly those of Kanishka and his successor Huvishka. Buddhism

and Zoroastrianism appear to have formed the state religion by a perfect syncretism and different religions were, in characteristic Indian fashion, on the best terms with one another, precisely as in China where we find the most varied religions side by side and on equal footing. The greatness of Kanishka may be gauged from the stories related about him five hundred years later, in the sixth century, by the Chinese pilgrim Song-Yun who mentions his marvellous four hundred feet tower at Purushapura,<sup>50</sup> and in the seventh century by Hsuan Tsang who found Afghanistan full of the legends of Kanishka. We learn from the latter learned pilgrim that the princes of the Hindu Kush prided themselves on their descent from that emperor. He mentions the splendid Sanghārāmas built by Kanishka for the accommodation of the Chinese princes who were his hostages in the district of Kabul. Alberuni's reference to Kanishka shows that legends about him survived until 930 A.C. in Afghanistan. "The Hindus had kings residing in Kabul; Turks who were said to be of Tibetan origin." The first of them was Barhatikin. "He wore Turkish dress, a short tunic open in front, a high hat, boots and arms... he brought those countries under his sway and ruled them under the title of Shahiya of Kabul. The rule remained among his descendants for generations, the number of which is said to be about sixty.... One of these series of kings was Kanik, the same who is said to have built the Vihara of Purushavar. It is called after him Kanik-Chaitya."<sup>51</sup> The Indian Archaeological Department excavated at Peshawar the site indicated by M. Foucher; among the important finds the most notable was the now celebrated relic casket bearing an image and inscription of Kanishka whose superintending engineer had the Greek name of Agiselaos. The Chinese princes who were hostages of Kanishka resided at Kabul in summer, at Peshawar in spring and autumn and during winter at Chinābhukti (Chinese Assignment) in the Panjab. They brought the Peach and the Pear trees of China to Peshawar and the Panjab. Kanishka was a patron of the arts and sciences and of architecture. The Kushāna period is noted for its sculpture and school of painting, which combined the art of China and Iran, to serve the ends of Indian civilization and culture.

M. Foucher by an arrangement with King Amanullah, then ruler of Afghanistan, acquired the right to dig for the French Archæological Mission for thirty years. The finds, including statuary,

Buddhist  
Afghanistan.

<sup>50</sup> Old name of Peshawar; Alberuni calls it Purushavar.

<sup>51</sup> Vol. II pp. 10-11.

of the Graeco-Gandharan art found in Afghanistan are lodged in the Afghanistan section of the Musée Guimet at Paris. A summary of the Buddhist period of a thousand years in Afghanistan appeared in two illustrated articles in the *Modern Review*.<sup>52</sup> The illustrations were the gift of M. Joseph Hackin, of the Musée Guimet, by whose courtesy they were reproduced. The archaeological discoveries of Hackin, Barthoux, and Godard in Afghanistan and the coloured reproductions by Madame Godard of the original paintings in the niche near the heads of the colossal Buddha statues still extant at Bamiyan, about seventy miles north-west of Kabul, form a remarkable collection of art in the Musée Guimet.<sup>53</sup> An account of the excavations during 1939 at Begram, the ancient Kapiśā has been published by M. Hackin in his illustrated articles entitled "Dig at Begram."<sup>54</sup> The finds at Begram include Hellenistic plaster plaques, Graeco-Roman or Alexandrian bronzes, Roman utensils of domestic use, Indian ivories of exquisite workmanship, and lovely Chinese lacquers of the first and second centuries A.C. In the first century the Roman peace extended to Syria and the caravan cities of Palmyra and Dura were held by Roman garrisons of the Emperor Augustus (63 B.C.—14 A.C.) who assured the safety of the overland trade which passed from India via Syria to Europe. It was about this time that the Kushānas began to found an empire which for a couple of centuries represented a link between the West, India and China. M. Hackin writes: "The founder of the dynasty Kujula Kadphises whose coins we found with the objects excavated at Begram took the title of King of kings, Maharajasa Raja Rajasa, accompanied by another title, unknown up to that time in the Indian protocol, Son of Heaven (Deva-putra). This is the classical title of the emperors of China and it remains in India the prerogative of the Kushānas. The Chier of a Scythian tribe who overthrew a Greek Kingdom and who assumed Turkish and Chinese titles came under Roman influence towards the end of his career; his last coins copy the denarii (Sk. Dināra) of the final years of Augustus between 4 B.C. and 2 A.C." About the workmanship of the objects found at Begram, M. Hackin writes "In the details of the decoration they recall certain monuments

<sup>52</sup> R. S. Pandit: "Buddhist Relics in Afghanistan." *Modern Review* January 1927 and "Greek Artists of Buddhist Afghanistan" *Modern Review*, July 1929.

<sup>53</sup> Hackin: *Nouvelles Recherches archéologiques à Bamiān*, 1933. Barthoux: *Les fouilles de Hadda, Mémoires de la Délégation française en Afghanistan* 1930. Godard et Hackin: *Les antiquités bouddhiques de Bamiān*, 1928.

<sup>54</sup> *Asia*, October 1940.

of ancient India, particularly the entrance doors of rock cut sanctuaries. This is especially true of the bands and of the elephants represented in the large ivory plaques. This unusual detail invites comparison to the entrance to the grotto called Lomas Rishi in ancient Magadha, Gangetic India (about 1st century B.C.), other details take us back to Mathura, 'Mathura of the gods' as the geographer Ptolemy called it,—an important centre of art at the time of the great Kushāna emperors and particularly during the reign of Kanishka and the beginning of the second century A.D."<sup>55</sup>... "Another ivory plaque of Begram belonging to the same group and reproducing a gateway (Torana) of a wholly classical type recalls at the same time Saranath and Mathura. There are others which reveal unexpected manifestation of the art of India, as witness the hunting scenes, remarkable for their movement and imagination, whether it is a case of the types represented, of their costume, or of the ideas expressed in the arrangement of the decoration"... "Among the coins found in the course of the investigations at Begram, on the level with the objects brought to light, there was none later than Vasudeva (about 200 A.D.)." M. Hackin adds that "the Kushānas, rulers of Kapiśā and patrons of Buddhism, had encouraged the beginnings of an art sharing both occidental and Indian influences. This new form, serving the cause of Buddhist proselytism, was destined to know a brilliant future. Our discoveries prove that we have in ancient Kapiśā—in what is now a section of modern Afghanistan—one of the sources of inspiration of Graeco-Buddhist art."

From Plato's doctrine of Ideas flows one of the two main currents of philosophic thought that have formed the mind of Europe. Like the Indians, Plato believed in a soul lost in the world of change striving always to escape from it and purifying itself through successive lives until it can achieve oneness with the soul of the world. It is related of Plotinus, the founder of the Neoplatonic school, that he was anxious to go to India to be instructed in Indian philosophy and with that object he accompanied the expedition of Gordian against Sapor, King of Persia (242 A.C.) but Gordian's death in Iraq (Mesopotamia) turned him back half way. Interest in the Indian theory of birth and rebirth led the Greek philosophers to approximate their ideas to it. Alberuni in the eleventh century was struck by the similarity of view of his contemporary Indians and the old Greeks. It is interesting to compare with the idea underlying stanza 8 of

Rebirth Act  
V, st. 8.

<sup>55</sup> Among the finds belonging to the Kushāna period housed in the Museum at Mathura is an inscribed life size statue of Kanishka.

Act V of the Signet Ring the quotation from Proclus given by Alberuni. "Remembering and forgetting are peculiar to the soul endowed with reason. It is evident that the soul has always existed. Hence it follows that it has always been both knowing and forgetting, knowing when it is separated from the body, forgetting when it is in connection with the body. For, being separated from the body, it belongs to the realm of the spirit, and therefore it is knowing; but being connected with the body, it descends from the realm of the spirit, and is exposed to forgetting because of some forcible influence over it."<sup>56</sup> Like Viśākha-datta, Kalhaṇa, too, makes use of this theory. A living being 'en ventre sa mere' is supposed to make all manner of good resolutions for the future which it forgets after its release from the embryonic confinement. Referring to this Kalhaṇa writes: "The former pious resolutions of those who obtain the crown are relegated to oblivion like the desire during the embryonic state of those who have since attained birth."<sup>57</sup>

The satisfactory explanation of good fortune and misfortune which the theory of Karma offers has been recognized by Professor Macdonell: "Indeed the Indian doctrine of transmigration, fantastic though it may appear to us, has the twofold merit of satisfying the requirement of justice in the moral government of the world, and at the same time inculcating a valuable ethical principle which makes every man the architect of his own fate".... "There is thus no room for independent divine rule by the side of the power of Karma which governs everything with iron necessity. Hence even the systems which acknowledge a God can only assign to him the function of guiding the world and the life of creatures in strict accordance with the laws of retribution, which even he cannot break."<sup>58</sup> In the political sphere the Indians thus enjoyed freedom from despotic rule for in the conception of Indian Kingship there was no absolute ruler but merely a ruler who was bound to guide the administration according to Dharma which he could not alter. The King ruled with the advice of the council of ministers (Mantri-parishad) and with the consent of the urban and rural (Paura-Janpadas) assemblies. This is summarized by Jayaswal as follows: "We had an organism or twin organism, the Paura-Janapada, which could depose the King, who nominated the successor to the throne, whose kindly

<sup>56</sup> India Vol. I p. 57.

<sup>57</sup> Rājataranginī VIII, 118.

<sup>58</sup> History of Sanskrit Literature p. 388.

feelings towards a member of the royal family indicated his chance of succession, whose president was apprised by the King of the policy of the State decided upon in the council of ministers, who were approached and begged by the King in all humility for a new tax, whose confidence in a minister was regarded as an essential for his appointment as Chancellor, who were consulted and referred to with profound respect by a King aspiring to introduce a new religion, who demanded and got industrial, commercial and financial privileges for the country, whose wrath meant ruin to provincial governors, who were coaxed and flattered in public proclamations, who could enact statutes even hostile to the king, in fine, who could make possible or impossible, the administration of the King. An organism with these constitutional attributes was an institution which we will be justified in calling the Hindu Dict. The Paura-Janapada were a powerful check on royal authority."<sup>59</sup>

Under Chandragupta Maurya, during the Gupta age under Vikramāditya, conqueror of the Scythians, National  
 Reurgence. Yaśovarman and Harsha, conquerors of the Huns, Sivaji and the Marathas, who liquidated the Mughal empire, and Ranjit Singh, who led the twelve republican Misl of the Khalsa in the Panjab and recovered Kashmir and Gandhāra from foreign rule, there were glorious epochs of sovereignty and freedom in India as in China under the Sung and T'ang dynasties after the elimination of foreign rule, and again under the Mings after the Mongols were overthrown. Long subjection to alien rule and the corruption of the higher classes do not destroy the recuperative powers of the people. The past does not die; it survives in philosophy, the arts, music, literature and it survives in individual and national character and purpose. The Anti-war and Tolerance Edicts of Aśoka cut in the rock at Girnar in Kathiawad, and Shahbazgarhi in Gandhāra, are once more recalled by the message of Gandhi. They find an echo among the Pathans at Charsadda, the ancient Pushkalāvati, capital of Gandhāra, where the people have organized themselves for a mission of non-violence and good-will to participate wholeheartedly in the national revival in India.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps the grain of wheat has to fall into the ground and perish that it might bring forth much fruit.

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<sup>59</sup> Hindu Polity.

<sup>60</sup> Gandhi was born in Kathiawad at Porbander. This ancient "City-port" was known to the Greeks as Bardaxema. Pushkalāvati was the Peukalaotis of the Greeks, Alberuni calls it Pukal.

In Act V, st. 11 the term *Chīna* occurs together with *Huṇa*.

This reading has been retained for the reading adopted by Professor Hillebrandt which puts

*Chīna*.

*Huṇa* with the people of *Chedi* is no better. The *China* and the *Kirāta* are mentioned as tribes in the hills of north-east India. *Kirāta* and *China* soldiers are described in the *Mahābhārata* as *Kāñchana*, gold or yellow coloured. (V. 18, V. 584). The *China* occur in company with *Kāmboja* and *Yavana* (VI. 9. v. 373). The *Vishnu Purāṇa* locates the *China* country in the Himalayas.<sup>61</sup> *China* is also used for *China*; and silk is mentioned as *China-paṭṭa* in the *Artha Śāstra*.<sup>62</sup>

Yule writes that for nearly a thousand years *China* was known to the peoples of Inner Asia under the name of *Khitai*, which is still current in Russian. *Cathay*, used in medieval Europe, was derived from *Khitai*. The Chinese were also known by land as *Seres* derived from silk, and *Sinai* by sea. It is possible that the Indians had their first accurate knowledge of *China* from the *Tsin* dynasty whose envoys, it is said, brought the compass to India. The Sanskrit word *China* may be derived from *Tsin*. The date of the first Chinese embassy to India is 64 A.C. In Chinese literature India is not mentioned before the middle of the second century before Christ.

The Turco-Mongols of Central Asia who succeeded the Greeks, Parthians and Scythians, as rulers of Afghanistan, the north-western and northern provinces of India, were known as *Kushāna* by the Iranians and Indians and as the *Yue-chi* or Moon-tribe by the Chinese. Under the Emperor *Kanishka* they had a great empire stretching from the *Oxus* to the borders of Bengal. *Kanishka*, perhaps a contemporary of *Trajan*, was a devout Buddhist. As *Āśoka* had sent missionaries to the West he sent Buddhist missionaries to *China*. In the fourth century when the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, *Fa-hien* travelled to India he was able to record that Central Asia and Afghanistan were all Buddhist territories. Among the Indians who went to *China*, *Kaśyapa Mātunga*, *Kumārajīva* and *Guparatna* were the most famous. *Kaśyapa* was the first Indian missionary to have preached in *China* and to have formally introduced the world religion of Buddha. *Kumārajīva* and *Guparatna* were the two greatest Indian translators of Buddhist

<sup>61</sup> Chapters 58 and 83. In the *Mahābhārata* *Yavana*, *China* and *Kāmboja* are mentioned as "ruthless *Mlechhas*" of the North. *Bhishma Parva* IX, 65.

<sup>62</sup> Bk. XI ch. 2 *Kālidāsa* mentions it as *Chīnamśuka*, *China* raiment, silk.



scriptures into Chinese from Sanskrit. The former translated 94 books, while the latter translated 64 books. The Chinese scholars who visited India vied with the Indians by their stupendous labour. Hsuan Tsang took from India to China 657 books and translated 73 of them. I-tsing brought to China from India nearly 400 books and translated 56 of them. The hazardous journeys of these scholars and their labour of love created intimate cultural contacts between India and China in the past. It was in the same spirit that Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore visited China and renewed the ancient friendly relationship by exchanging greetings and gifts with Chinese scholars in our times.

During the Gupta period a number of Chinese pilgrims among whom was Fa-hien visited India. Fa-hien's work entitled *Fo-kuo-ki* (Records of Buddhist Kingdoms) covers the period from 399 to 414 A.C. The latest translation of this interesting work is by Legge. The *Life and Travels of Hsuan Tsang*, translated in three volumes by M. Stanislas Julien, is a standard work which deals with the famous Chinese Buddhist scholar's tour in India in the middle of the seventh century. Beal's *Si-yu-ki*, or *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, is an accessible work in two volumes which contains the account of Chinese scholars to India including Hsuan Tsang. M. René Grousset's vivid description of the journey of the intrepid Master of the Law, Hsuan Tsang,<sup>63</sup> through the arid Gobi desert and over the snow mountains to the plains of India, in search of the sacred texts of Buddhism, is contained in his powerful book entitled *In the Footsteps of the Buddha*. M. Chavanne's work, *Voyage de Song Yun dans l'Udyana et le Gandhara* (518-522 B.C.), deals with the voyages of the Chinese visitors Song Yun and Hwei Sang. Udyāna, or the garden land of India, is the valley of the Kabul River where in the sixth century the mighty Hun King, Mihirakula, had established himself. Song Yun visited Mihirakula in 520 A.C. and has given us an account of this scourge of mankind who in the words of Kalhana was "the slayer of three crores (thirty million) of human beings." Chavanne's work refers to many other early pilgrims including Che-mong who left China in 404 A.C. and Fa-Yong who commenced his journey to India in 420 A.C. Chavannes and Sylvain Lévi translated the itinerary of Ou-K'ong who travelled in

<sup>63</sup> M. Grousset's spelling has been adopted as it seemed nearest to the name of the great Master of the Law. I had the privilege to meet the learned Chinese Buddhist abbot, Rev. Tai Hsu, in December 1939, at Saranath who approved of it.

India in the eighth century. Professor S. Lévi also edited the work of I-tsing entitled *Les Religieux éminents qui aller chercher la loi dans les pays d'Occident*. This work gives an account of sixty Chinese Buddhist scholars who visited India in the latter half of the seventh century. I-tsing was no less famous in the Buddhist world of China than the great Master of the Law. He stayed in the Indian colony at Sumatra and there studied Sanskrit in the great university of Śrīvijaya. The Indo-Malaya state of Sumatra under the dynasty of Sailendra had established its hegemony over all the South seas from Java (Yava-dvīpa) to the Gulf of Siam, and it had caused the famous Buddhist reliefs of Borobudur to be sculptured in Java and at Dvāravatī in Southern Siam. I-tsing left China in 671, arrived in Tāmra-līpti in 673 and studied for ten years at the university of Nālanda, not far from Pāṭaliputra, under the greatest professors of the time. He was the best Sanskrit scholar among the Chinese pilgrims to India whose works have so far been discovered. He returned to China in 695, and died in 703. One of I-tsing's interesting books has been translated by Takakasu and is entitled. *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practised in India and the Malay Archipelago*. Besides giving a picture of life at the Nālanda University, the complete curriculum in vogue in those days, and the method of teaching, it throws light on the general social conditions of India. I-tsing died in 713 A.C. A number of learned Indian scholars travelled to China and translated the Sanskrit books they took with them into Chinese. The most famous among these were Kumārajīva in the fourth century, and Bodhidharma in the sixth century. In one of his sermons to the Emperor Leang Wu Ti, Bodhidharma, it is recorded, said: "There is no Buddha outside the spirit. Save the reality of the spirit all is imaginary. The spirit is the Buddha and the Buddha is the spirit. To imagine a Buddha outside the spirit, to conceive that he is seen in an external place is but delirium"<sup>64</sup> Buddhism in China was of course much older. In the sixties of the first century it was officially welcomed in China and in that decade a Buddhist work, the Sūtra of forty-two sections, was compiled in Chinese and a temple was constructed in its honour. This work refers to the rules of discipline observed in Buddhist convents. Chinese Buddhists have continued to make their pilgrimages to India through the centuries to the places of the Birth, the Enlightenment and the Nirvana of the Blessed One like the pilgrims from Tibet, Burma, Siam, Cambodia, the Malay islands and Ceylon. And numerous Sanskrit books which

<sup>64</sup> Wieger: *History of the Religious Beliefs and Philosophical Opinions in China* (1927) p. 524.

are no longer extant in India, though their names were known, have been found in China and Tibet mostly in Chinese and Tibetan translations and some in the original Sanskrit and Pāli. The Chinese records of India are especially helpful in fixing the dates of Indian kings, scholars and philosophers who are mentioned in them and in tracing the dates of authors whose works were translated into Chinese.

India and China are changing faster than any other country in the world and yet perhaps the masses in no country hang on more tenaciously to the past than in India and China. The civilization of the people of India and China has seemingly a great deal in common. In both countries the people have endured centuries of war, pestilence, invasion and human misrule. They have learnt from deep suffering and sorrow the lessons of endurance, tenacity, tolerance and understanding of life. They have faced many a crisis and yet preserved their identity. Their age proves that they have inherited a sound instinct for life and a vitality and staying power which are remarkable. These have made it possible for the Indian and Chinese people to survive, by making adjustments in their political, economic and social life, during periods of historic changes which might have meant ruin to a less robust civilization. World events and modern means of communication are bringing the people of India and China closer together. In future, they are destined once more to play a great role in making their contribution to civilization, culture and world peace.

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## F

### CRITICAL NOTE

Questions of text are often of importance to the translator. It should be his endeavour to translate faithfully the work of the author. It is not right for a translator to innovate or adopt the conjectural readings proposed by learned editors which may amount to a re-writing of the original.

The text as edited by Telang has been adopted for it is the most widely circulated in India and abroad, and for purposes of study side by side with Sanskrit, by those who are learning the language, the translation of the play is thus likely to be the most useful. The translator disclaims all title to sit as judge in matters of scholarship ; and does not consider it necessary to discuss the merits of the various readings preferred by learned editors which differ from Telang's text. The different readings mainly amount to verbal changes. They do not, in general, make a substantial change so far as the translation is concerned.

Telang's mastery of the language, his store of illustrative learning, and unfailing good sense might well have justified acceptance of his verdicts in block ; but there are some readings where between two courses it was open to take either the one or the other, and a few where liberty has been claimed to differ from Telang's earlier conclusions in the light of later research. The principal places where other readings have been preferred are indicated below. D. H. and T. are abbreviations for the editions of Dhruva, Hillebrandt and Telang. The references to pages in T. are to the seventh edition of the *Mudrā Rākṣhaśa*, Bombay Sanskrit Series, Bombay, 1928.

### ACT I

- T. p. 65      ..    The stage direction is amended as in D which adds *nishkrānte śiśye*. This seems necessary as *Chāṇakya* at the end of the soliloquy shouts for the pupil who is evidently out of sight.
- T. p. 67    ..      ..    The passage beginning with *tad abhiyogam prati*, etc., is somewhat confusing. H.'s reading which simplifies is preferable.

## ACT II

- T. p. 118 .. In Rākshasa's speech anushtihyatām is a better reading than anushtihyate. The Chamberlain after getting the minister's permission forthwith proceeds to decorate him. The need for the emendation is thus indicated.
- T. p. 122 .. Sa esha before stanza 12 has been omitted as in D. It is redundant.
- T. p. 124 .. Pravīraka kshipram idānim before stanza 13 has been omitted as in D.
- T. p. 127 .. Read Chāṇakya for Chanākya hatakena as in H. to avoid repetition.
- T. p. 134 .. Before stanza 16, following D. and H., kashṭam bhoh kashṭam has been omitted.
- T. p. 145 .. In kim tatra prakāśam read, in place of the last word, kāraṇam as in H.
- T. p. 147 .. Athavā siddham eva is omitted as in D. and H.

## ACT III

- T. p. 160 .. Read devah in place of adya before Chandraguptah in the Chamberlain's speech as in D. and H.
- T. p. 165 .. Śāntam pāpam is used twice in the king's speech. The repetition is avoided. H. omits this altogether.
- T. p. 165 .. At the end of Chāṇakya's speech Vartāmahe as in D. and H. is apparently preferable to Vatsyāmah.
- T. p. 182 .. In stanza 29 read muktam in place of baddham as in H. This alteration is clearly required in view of the entry of Chāṇakya in the first Act with loose tresses, and Act VII stanza 17 where he finally ties his hair.
- T. p. 184 .. Read rājakāryāṇi in place of rājyam in the king's speech as in H.

## ACT IV

- T. p. 196 .. After Bhāgurāyaṇa's speech H. has a stage direction, praveśanam nāṭayatah, to mark the entry into the house.

- T. p. 197 .. In stanza 8 read mantra in place of sattva.  
 T. p. 197 .. In place of śruṇu, in Bhāgurāyaṇa's speech, read śrotum arhati kumārah, as in D. and H.  
 T. p. 208 .. Malayaketu's speech is important and sheds light on the ancient Indian constitution. The readings in D. and H. are preferable.  
 T. p. 212 .. Read abibhatsa-darśanam praveśaya enam as in D.

## ACT V

- T. p. 220 .. The concluding portion of Siddhārthaka's speech, when he sees the monk, is amended as in D.  
 T. p. 222 .. In the monk's reply the reading karna deśa niveśitah lekhaḥ is preferred.  
 T. p. 233 .. In Malayaketu's speech, Rākshasa and Yuktam are used twice; the repetition is avoided.  
 T. p. 234 .. Before stanza 8 read, as in D., nāti doṣam iva atra paśyāmi.  
 T. p. 238 .. At the end of the forged letter add Siddhārthakāt after asmāt. Bhāgurāyaṇa who does not know the arrested person addresses him, after the letter is read, as Bhadrā Siddhārthaka which indicates the need for the emendation as in D. and H.  
 T. p. 249 .. Sa-bhayam in the stage direction is omitted in D. and H.  
 T. p. 250 .. After the stage direction ābharaṇam nirvarṇya in D. and H. Rākshasa says na etan mayā preṣhitam. This reading is worth considering though it has not been adopted.

## ACT VI

- T. p. 278. .. Before stanza 14. D. has kim ayam ākasmikah śabdah srūyate. This reading is preferred in order to avoid tautology in the lyrical passage which follows.

- T. p. 281 .. In place of maṇikāra read Sauvarṇika as a designation of Viṣṇu-dāsa.
- T. p. 283 .. Rākshasa's speech, following the stage direction sāvegam ātmagatam is simplified in H. and is a preferable reading.
- T. p. 288 .. The reading etena kāraṇena bhavati asya maraṇasya kālahaṇam as in D. and H. at the end of the spy's speech is preferred.
- T. p. 292 .. Add aprāptau api before vadhya-sthānam in the concluding part of the spy's speech.
- T. p. 293 .. Read lekham in place of kaṣṭham after tādruk in stanza 20, as in H.

## ACT VII

- T. p. 297 .. Chandana-dāsa's wife recites stanza 3 in D. This has been adopted.
- T. p. 299 .. D. and H. read kulavadhu-janasya in place of kula-janasya.
- T. p. 300 .. In Chandana-dāsa's speech D. and H. have preferred the reading which means that the Nandas who have gone to heaven will show mercy to their adherents. This appears to be in consonance with the theme of the play and shows solidarity with the cause supported by Rākshasa.
- T. p. 302 .. In the stage direction add parishvajya after putram as in D.
- T. p. 305 .. At the end of the Executioner's speech read as in D. Nanda kula-samohūṇakasya, etc.
- T. p. 310 .. After stanza 11 Chāṇakya's speech has been amended as in H. .... amātya-Rākshasam. Ayam te paitrukah amātyamukhyah. Rākshasa's svagatam which comes after this indicates the need for the emendation. .

T. p. 317

.. In stanza 17 D. has adopted a reading which would mean that Chāṇakya ordered the disbanding of the whole army. It is interesting to note that the question of disarmament was considered as one of practical politics when some of these Mss. were written. T.'s reading which means merely the ordering of a general jail delivery has been retained as being in consonance with the spirit of the Artha Śāstra attributed to Chāṇakya. H. agrees with T.

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## G

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The translation of the *Mudrā Rākshasa* was completed in prison at Dehra Dun in 1941. It was difficult, in the circumstances, to obtain the permission of the authors to quote from their books included in the list given below. I take this opportunity to make grateful acknowledgments to the learned authors.

I am indebted to Mr. K. N. Dikshit, Director General of Archaeology, Government of India, for suggesting a list of reference books for the Maurya period and for valuable information and to Dr. V. S. Sukthankar, General Editor, *Mahābhārata*, at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, for a similar helpful list and the loan of rare editions of the text. My thanks are due to Pandit Amaranatha Jha, Vice-Chancellor Allahabad University, for long and repeated loan of books from the University Library; to Professor R. K. Mookerji, of the Lucknow University, and to other friends who sent books from the Bombay Branch of the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society.

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Many of the books which Mr. Dikshit and Dr. Sukthankar were good enough to recommend I was able to consult; some of them I had formerly read. The following list includes most of the books suggested by them and I have ventured to make a considerable addition to their list to enable the reader to span time and, to quote the phrase of Jean Bloch—*pour mieux comprendre mon temps*—to understand our period better.

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## NOTES

### ACT I

(*Benedictory Stanzas*).—In India, as in ancient Greece, there was no unbridgeable gap between men and the immortal gods. Here is the greatest of the gods in sportive mood while his divine consort is frankly jealous. The first verse is a dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī. The latter's questions are shown in inverted commas. Vijayā, in mythology, is the Maid of Honour of Pārvatī. The eternal triangle is utilized to suggest that the theme of the play is diplomacy. The second verse describes the cosmic dance of Śiva. It emphasizes the need for circumspection in politics and indicates that strategy is necessarily conditioned by environment. The two stanzas together make up the Nāndī or benediction with which a play should begin and they ingeniously disclose the *mis-en-scène*. For the descent of the celestial river on earth, Tripura, and the cosmic dance of Śiva, see App. A.

- 2 Stage Director (*Sūtra-dhāra*).—Literally string-holder. The origin of the term is from puppet shows and marionnettes.
- 3 Academy (*Parishad*).—Assembly, audience. For Mantriparishad cabinet of ministers, see Ar. Śāe. Bk. 1 ch. 7, 14 and 15 and App. D.
- 4 Farming (*Kṛishi*).—Cultivation. From Kṛish-to plough, a term common to the Iranians and Indo-Aryans before the latter arrived in India through the valleys of Afghanistan.
- 2 to 5 Rice (*Śālī*).—Paddy, rice, current in Kashmiri.
- 6 Music (*Samgīta*).—A technical term of the Nāṭyaśāstra (Dramaturgy) of Bharata for vocal and instrumental music and includes dancing.
- 7 Mistress (*Kuṭumbinī*). Is derived from Kuṭumba—family. Another reading is Gṛihinī, literally Haus Frau, from Gṛiha—house. In the Rīg Veda, Gṛiha-pati is the lord of the house or homestead. The wife participated with the husband in the offering of sacrifice. She is the Gṛiha-patnī—mistress of the household, sharing the control not only of the servants but also of the unmarried brothers and sisters of the husband. Kālidāsa thus describes the wife in the Raghuvamśa—Gṛihinī saohivah sakhī mithah priya-śīśyā lalite kalā-vidhau—mistress of the house-hold, adviser, a perfect companion in the privacy of the home, a beloved pupil in literature and the fine arts.
- 8 Tri-varga—Dharma, Artha and Kāma. Dharma—the conception of life which enables man to attain harmony in the right and just mode of living; Artha—material well-being and necessary exertion to obtain economic security and individual freedom; Kāma—the development of the emotional and æsthetic life.
- 9 Aija—Prākṛit for Ārya—noble, sir. The Actress speaks Prākṛit though she is addressed as Āryā—honoured lady—in Sanskrit. Ji, the current honorific suffix at the end of Indian names has an ancient ancestry being derived from Arya through the Prākṛit Aija.

- 10 Lunar eclipse—There is a *double entendre* on Ketu—Malayaketu. Mercury, the wise one—Chāṇakya; Chandra the moon is short for Chandragupta. The popular belief, still prevalent, is that the demon Ketu seizes the moon which causes the appearance of the eclipse; hence picturesquely called Grahaṇa—seizure. Dr. Thibaut has shown that Indian astronomers knew that the earth rotated round its axis and they had explained the cause of solar and lunar eclipses. The Surya Siddhānta edited and translated by Whitney is earlier than 300 A.C. For Āryabhaṭa, celebrated astronomer of Pāṭaliputra, see App. C.
- 11 Kautilya is the hero of the play; his personal name is Vishnu-gupta, the patronymic is Chāṇakya and the surname is Kautilya. He is referred to as the Ārya par excellence in the play.
- 12 Mukta-Sikhā. The Nanda King had insulted Chāṇakya by ejecting him from the seat of honour in the banquet hall. He vowed that until the insult was avenged by the destruction of the Nanda dynasty he would keep his hair loose. The theme of the drama Veni-Samhāra is based on a similar vow. Draupadī, heroine of the Mahābhārata, grossly insulted by the Kaurava prince, wears her hair in loose tresses until the end of the war when the insult is avenged by the slaughter of the Kaurava prince. It was customary for women to wear the hair plaited and for men to wear it braided and wound like a shell.
- 13 Vatsa—Terms of endearment for the son. Vatsā—daughter.
- 14 Āsana—A seat; a grass mat or one of cotton or woollen fabric. The āsana, a term in current use, occurs in the R̥g Veda where mat making is described as a product of women's handicraft.
- 15 Mleccha—One who speaks a different language, a foreigner. Like Homer's barbarophoni it was used for strangers and in ancient times implied no hatred or contempt. Later it was used in the Greek sense of Barbarian. "It is no crime for Mlecchas to sell or mortgage the life of their offspring. But never shall an Ārya be subjected to slavery." Ar. Śāś. Bk. III Ch. 13.
- 16 The Elephant and the Lion. See App. C.
- 17 St. 13. The Lotus is the national flower of India. Of all water plants it is the most exquisite in gesture, colour and scent. Rising through slime and ooze to life in light and air the powers of the growth of the lotus plant are tremendous and its leaf and blossom stand high above the water. The simile is thus appropriate.
- 18 Tapo-vana—Penance-forest, sanctuary. Tapas meaning bodily asceticism occurs in the Vedas. Those who renounced the world or took refuge in a convent or temple were, as in the Byzantine empire, spared by political opponents.
- 19 Brihaspati—Vedic term; in the post-vedic period he is the preceptor and counsellor of the gods. As Regent of the planet Jupiter Thursday is named Brihaspati vāra after him.
- 20 Visha-Kanya—Poison maid; a glamour girl sent as a secret emissary to seduce the victim so that her embraces might prove fatal. Tawney writes that in the 11th tale of the Gesta Romanorum it is mentioned that an Indian queen had sent a poison maid to Alexander the Great and that Aristotle detected

and frustrated the design. Prof. Dhruva in his edition of the *Mudrā Rākshasa* (3rd Ed. p. 110) refers to the ancient Indian medical work *Sūgrūta* I, 5, and to other works, for a detailed description of the poison maid. Girls who had fed on poison and who acted out the influence of the poison are mentioned in Aesculapius. And the femme fatale is also referred to by Guy de Maupassant. In one of his short stories Maupassant relates how a great English family allowed one of its women to be inoculated with a horrible and contagious disease in order to transmit the same to Napoleon Bonaparte, who was miraculously saved by a sudden illness at the hour of the fatal rendezvous.

- 21 Chara—A spy whose duty it was to move constantly among the people to gather information. Artha Śāstra has two kinds of spies Chara and Chāra. Their distinctive work is fully explained by Dr. Otto Stein—Megasthenes and Kauṭilya p. 172. See Ar. Śās Bk. I Ch. 7 where spies are called the eyesight of kings.
- 22 Prachāra—Propaganda; currently used for all manner of propaganda including political.
- 23 Saha-Utthāyin—companion in Utthāna which is a technical term in the Ar. Śās. Bk. I, Ch. 19; it is explained as the root of all Artha—wealth and territory. The term occurs in this sense in the Emperor Aśoka's Rock Edict VI at Girnar in Kathiawad.
- 24 Tikṣhṇa—Assassin; Rasada—poison giver from rasa—mercury. Ar. Śās. Bk. I ch. 12. Kaṭhapa uses these terms frequently in the Rājataranginī.
- 25 Jyotiṣh—Science of the celestial luminaries is one of the Angas or limbs of the Vedas.
- 26 Kahapaṇaka—Monk. The term was used for both Buddhist and Jain monks; here it is used for a Jain monk. App. C.
- 27 Yama-paṭa—Cloth with pictures of Yama, Judge of the Dead and King of Hades. In the Rīg Veda, Yama, son of Vivasvat, is mentioned as king of the blessed dead who gathers and gives them a resting place. In the Iranian Avesta he is Yima, son of Vivahvant. See App. C.
- 28 Dharma—A term used in the Upanishads. According to the Brihadāraṇyaka, Brahman created the Dharma than which there is nothing higher nor anything harder to describe. Later the Buddhists and Jains popularized it. "Dharma is not simply law but that which underlies and includes the law, a word often most difficult to translate and best rendered by truth and righteousness." Prof. Rhys Davids, Buddhism p. 45.
- 29 Chandra—Moon; short for Chandragupta. The Greek writers refer to a King known as Xandrames; Sk. Chandramas—moon. The day lotuses close their calyx-eyes being unwilling to see the glory of the moon after their benefactor the sun has sunk.
- 30 Kāyastha—A scribe, clerk. It recurs in Act III with the name of Achala. In Kashmir it was used in the sense of a functionary, a government employé in the civil administration by Kshemendra and Kaṭhapa. Rājataranginī VIII, 86-90.
- 31 Śreṣṭhthīn—term used in the Artha Śāstra for the chairman of a guild or corporation. The Prākṛit form Setthi is used in Act VII. Through the Prākṛit Setthi is derived the current honorific prefix Seth for a leading merchant.

- 32 **Mūdrā**—Seal, signet. Ancient seals believed to be of the 3rd century B.C. have been found during the excavations at Pāṭali-putra about 18 feet below ground level. Dealing with seal No. 2, bearing the Prākṛit legend Gopāśa (of Gopā), Dr. Spooner writes—"The point of special interest in regard to it, however, is its resemblance in size and shape to the type of seal which became so popular at a later date and which bears such a curious resemblance to the modern departmental seals of the Government of India." *Archæological Survey of India Annual Report 1912-1913*, p. 77. For use of the royal seal, see *Ar. Śās. Bk. I, Ch. 20*.
- 33 **Maśī-bhājana**—Inkpot. The actual use of ink (Maśī) is proved by an Inscription of the 2nd century B.C. from a Buddhist relic mound. From the statements of Nearchos and Quintus Curtius ink was apparently used in India in the 4th century B. C. Maśī for ink is current in some provincial languages. The Sanskrit Kalama for pen was probably borrowed from the Greek Kalamos.
- 34 **Patra**—Quintus Curtius tells us that, in the time of Alexander the Great, Indians used birch bark for writing. It is also mentioned by Alberuni in the 11th century. Birch bark (Bhūrja-patra) is still used by the Brahmans of Kashmir. In South India palm-leaf was similarly used and is still used for horoscopes. In the seventh century the Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang found the palm-leaf in common use throughout India. Royal grants were usually recorded on copper plates; it is interesting to note that the plates were made in imitation of palm-leaf or birch bark. *App. A. Script.*
- 35 **Jaya-sabda**—Sieghell, a victory slogan with which kings and ministers were greeted. The ruling prince is still greeted in Kashmir and the neighbouring hill states with the slogan 'Maharaj Jaya' with the emphasis on the latter word; when the men are standing in a line it goes off like a feu de joie. In mass demonstrations and political meetings the Jaya slogan still retains its importance.
- 36 **Dāna**—Gift; it should only be made to the learned and deserving on appropriate occasions. Dharma-dāna occurs in *Aśoka's Rock Edict XI*.
- 37 **St. 20**. For the names of the countries see *App. E. Chitra-gupta*—keeper of the records of Yama.
- Pārasika**—Persian. After the conquest of Iran by the Moslem Arabs the followers of Zarathushtra, prophet of Iran, took refuge in Western India; the refugees landed at Sanjan about 716, A.O. where the local Rajah helped them to build a Fire-temple. Their descendants are known as Parsi, a term derived from Pārasika. *App. E.*
- 38 **Lekhya**—a written document. The term occurs in the *Vasiṣṭha Dharma Sūtra*, a pre-Buddhist work. *Ar. Śās.* mentions various kinds of written documents and the importance of good hand-writing is emphasized, *Bk. II, Ch. 10*. The advanced state of Maurya calligraphy is referred to by H. P. Shastri in *Magadhan Literature* pp. 61-62.



- 39 Kālapāśa and Dandapāśa—Literally holders of the noose of death and of executive authority respectively. In the Ar. Śās. the term for a magistrate is Daṇḍadhara Bk. I, ch. 4 and Daṇḍa-pāla Bk. I, Ch. 12. App. C.
- 40 According to the Ar. Śās. Bk. III, Ch. 16, the misconduct of a monk was an offence against righteousness and in the long run a peril to the king. A person in holy orders might be expelled or derelict; he could not be executed. Such 'benefit of clergy' was extended to Buddhist, Jain and other non-conformists. The nature of punishments to monks and nuns is referred to in Aśoka's Rock Edicts at Allahabad-Kosum and at Sanohi.
- 41 It was the king's prerogative to pass the sentence of death. In most Indian States the death penalty, if imposed by the courts, is still subject to sanction by the ruling prince.
- 42 Karpau-pidhāya—Covering the ears with the palms of the hands is still a common gesture to express horror.
- 43 For Nanda's legendary hoard of gold see Act III st. 27. In Act III st. 18 the Nanda is said to have scorned Kubera, god of wealth. The prosperous figure of Kubera is very familiar through Buddhist sculptures.
- 44 Pariklesha—Repression by government; it is in this sense that the term is used in Ar. Śās. Bk. IV, Ch. 9 and in Aśoka's Rock Edict at Dhauri where it occurs in the Pāli form Paliklesha.
- 45 Śibi—King Śibi of the Indian Frontier offered his own flesh to the pursuing hawk to save the life of the pigeon which had sought refuge with the king. It is a Jātaka and often represented in Buddhist sculptures e.g., at Amraoti Stūpa of the beginning of the Christian era. This famous story occurs in Chinese and Mohamadan forms. The ancient practice of giving protection to those who seek asylum is strictly followed by the people of the Frontier to this day.
- 46 Vanik—Trader, merchant, derivatives Vaniya, Baniya. The English factors of the East Indian Company learnt the local term Vaniya at Surat. Later it was used for Indian agents of foreign firms and manufacturers; in this sense 'Baniyan' is current in the commercial parlance of Calcutta.
- 47 Durga-pāla—Minister for Defence or Internal Affairs. Anta-pāla was the minister for frontier affairs or Lord of the Marches. Ar. Śās. Book II Ch. 1.
- 48 St. 27. Ekachara—The solitary elephant who roams away from the herd. Ar. Śās. Bk. II, Ch. 2.

#### ACT II

- 1 Maṇḍala—Sphere, circle. A political term used in the Ar. Śās. Bk. VI, Ch. 2, in the sense of a federation or association of states. The modern Chamber of Princes is called Narendra Mandal. There is a *double entendre* in this verse; the snake charmer draws, on the ground, a charmed circle (maṇḍala) to paralyze the snake.

- 2 Mantra—Spell, also political consultation; hence mantrin—minister. Ruling princes under the control of ministers are compared to snakes under the influence of snake charmers. App. D. The store-house of spells and charms is the Atharva Veda which also deals with curing bodily ailments and is thus the beginning of Indian medicine. According to Adalbert Kuhn the remedies recommended in it agree in purpose and content with many old German, Lettic and Russian charms.
- 3 Ākāśa—is a stage direction which literally means in the air, space or vacancy; it is intended to enable an actor on the stage to carry on a supposed dialogue with other people who are unseen.
- 4 Upāya—Diplomatic means. This is a technical term of Indian political science. Ar. Śās. Bk. II, Ch. 10 mentions four forms of Upāya viz: Sāma—negotiated peace, Dāma—paying the price for peace, Danḍa—punitive expedition, Bheda—sowing dissension in dealing with the enemy.
- 5 Amātya—Minister, current in Indian States. For difference between mantri and amātya see Ar. Śās. Bk. I at end of Ch. 8. Former ministers were, by courtesy, referred to by their late official designations e.g., in the edicts of the Emperor Samudra Gupta. Jayaswal: Hindu Polity p. 150.
- 6 Vrishqi—Yādava clan of Kṛishṇa; they were a republican clan in the 4th century B.C. Ar. Śās. Bk. I, Ch. 6. On their coinage of the 1st century B.C. is found the word Gaṇa—republic.
- 7 Kamalā—also called Lakshmi, is Fortune. During the churning of the ocean of milk, to obtain ambrosia (Amṛita), by the gods and the Titans fourteen jewels emerged one of which was Lakshmi who was borne on a Kamala—lotus. App. C. Since the lotus grows in shallow muddy pools the origin of Lakshmi is poetically referred to as lowly.
- 8 Gandha-gaja—The tusker, the scent of whose ichor scatters all male elephants who venture to approach him for a fight.
- 9 St. 7. Purandhrī—Mature woman. Telang compares this with Milton's view in Samson Agonistes, Verse 1010.
- 10 Kāśa—Saccharum Spontaneum; a kind of grass which grows wild on the banks of rivers and streams in the U.P. and Bihar. The base of its flower is surrounded by soft silver wool which when scattered by gusts of wind whitens the neighbouring fields in autumn. Kāśa is the well-known material for basket work in these provinces.
- 11 St. 8. Varma—Armour. Ar. Śās. Bk. II, Ch. 2. Also Vāra-bhāṇa—arrow-guard is used in this Act. App. E. Arms.
- 12 Kanehukī—The chamberlain; an important officer of the royal court and household who enjoyed the confidence and respect of the king. Ar. Śās. Bk. I, Ch. 21. In drama he is usually delineated as a man past middle age, disillusioned by close association with royalty.
- 13 Sugāṅga—Name of the royal palace of the Nanda meaning lovely view of the Gaṅgā river.
- 14 Kumāra—Son of a king or ruler. Currently used for descendants of ruling princes, chiefs and landed magnates.

- 15 Flicker of the left eye-lid is considered unfavourable for men but favourable for women; *per contra* the flicker of the right eye-lid is favourable for men though unfavourable for women. The belief still survives.
- 16 Bhramara—The bee; also called Madhu-kara—honey maker. Bee-keeping is an old art in India, See App. C. Ar. Śās. Bk. II, Ch. 15.
- 17 Gāthā—Originally a song in the Vedic and Iranian languages; later applied to a meter used largely by the northern Buddhists *e.g.*, in the famous canonical work the Life of the Buddha (Lalitā-vistāra) in which the Prākṛit language is made to resemble Sanskrit by the addition of regular endings and other adaptations. The verse in the text is in Prākṛit.
- 18 Śmaśru—Beard. There is a *double entendre* on the word Virādha; in order to hide his visitor's name which R. has half uttered he suddenly refers to the discomfort of his own virādha (over-grown) beard. Shaving is very ancient in India. Beards were usual in the Vedic age but shaving was also practised. In the Atharva Veda we read that when the ceremony of shaving off his beard was performed on King Soma, Vāyu brought the hot water and Savitṛi skilfully wielded the razor.
- 19 Yavana—Ionian Greek; later applied to the Bactrian Greeks and Greek colonists in Afghanistan and the Panjab. Its Prākṛit form Yona is used in the inscriptions of Aśoka in referring to the Hellenic rulers of Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, Epirus and Macedonia who are named in the imperial edicts. For Śaka (Scythian), Kāmboja (Afghan), Pārasika (Persian), Bāhika (Central Asiatic tribe settled in the Panjab) see App. E.
- 20 Surangā—Tunnel, subterranean passageway mentioned in the Ar. Śās. *e.g.*, Bk. VII, ch. 17. The term survives in the provincial languages as surang. According to Dr. J. Jolly it was borrowed from the Greek *Syrinx* probably after the invasion of Alexander the Great. See App. E.
- 21 Śakti—For the story of the miraculous weapon given to Karna which killed, instead of Arjuna, the son of the giantess Hidimbi see Mahābhārata, Droṇa Parvan, chapters 179-180.
- 22 Chāṇakya-hataka. Hata-killed, dead; with ka as a diminutive. From its equivalent mṛita (dead) are derived in the various provincial languages, muṇ, muo, mōḷā; and the expression 'good as dead' survives and is commonly used by women as a curse.
- 23 Upāṁśu-vadha—Secret death. See Upāṁśu-danda (secret punishment) of princes in Ar. Śās. Bk. I, Ch. 17.
- 24 Abhisheka 'Sprinkling' the king with sacred waters at his coronation; it corresponds with the Biblical "anointing." The ceremony, in all its pristine splendour is observed today not only in India but abroad in Greater India where the culture of the mother country still exercises a living influence. The ancient ceremony described in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa is still performed by Brahmanas in Nepal, Siam (Thailand) and Cambodia. See Kalhana III, 528. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity II. pp. 52-53 for the coronation oath. App. D.

- 25 Hima-vimala-muktā—Snow white pearls.—Wilson observes "This comparison is of too rare an occurrence to be looked upon as commonplace, and it is an idea not likely to have occurred to a native of the South of India."
- 26 Vaikakshya—The sacred thread worn across the shoulder. The ceremony is called Upa-nayana—carrying the pupil to the teacher. The cord has three strings with three tiny knots symbolizing purity in thought, word and deed. The investiture marks the beginning of education. It is an important ceremony among Indians including the Parsis, and among the remnants of the Zoroastrians in Iran. The Avestan ceremony shows that it goes back to Indo-Iranian times. Flower garlands are still worn on festive occasions and in processions; such use of flower garlands appears to be peculiar to India.
- 27 Yantra-torana—Mechanized archway. This idea is probably taken from Ar. Śās. Bk. I, Ch. 20 "the whole building being so constructed with mechanical contrivance (yantra) so that it could be made to fall when necessary."
- 28 Nāgaraka was an officer who controlled the city. Under him were Gopas each of whom was in charge of ten to forty households according to the Ar. Śās. Bk. II Ch. 36. The Gopa's duty was to maintain registers for an accurate census and to keep a record of "the occupations of both men and women in those households, and also to ascertain their income and expenditure."
- 29 Stanzas 17 and 18 are well known in Indian literature. "It may be doubted if perseverance is anywhere recommended in a more manly and spirited tone" Wilson.
- 30 Parishwaj—To embrace men friends by way of greeting is still customary, more especially in north-west and western India. Brahman women in Kashmir normally greet one another in this fashion. This ancient practice among women is proved by a stage direction in Kālidāsa's play Vikrama and Urvashi. Act I Scene I.
- 31 Brāhmaṇī—R. refers to his wife as the Brahmana lady. He is a Brāhmaṇa for Chāṇakya calls him Śrottriya in the first Act. The delivery of the ring 'to while away tedium' during separation is an important incident in Kālidāsa's famous play where the King eventually recalls his marriage with Śakuntalā on seeing the lost ring recovered by accident.
- 32 Upajāpa—Whispering campaign; from jap—to whisper. Kalhaṇa uses Karṇa-japa—ear-whisperer.

### ACT III

- 1 Trishṇā—literally thirst, hence greed, desire. In the philosophic language of the Vedānta "thirst" means desire; under its influence the soul perceives the universe like a mirage just as the panting antelope sees sheets of water in the desert. Thus mirage is picturesquely called mṛiga-trishṇā—deer-thirst.
- 2 Kaumudī—utsava. The autumn festival of the full moon in the month of Kārttika still retains its popularity. In Western India it is usual to prepare white dishes and wear white clothes for dinner *à fresco* in the moonlight. Singing and dancing are necessary items of the celebration. Rāsa, the arcadian dance of Kṛishṇa and the Cowherdesses (Gopīs), is favoured alike by the rich and poor.

- 3 Chāmara—Yak tail whisk. The white yak tail and the parasol are ombloms of royalty. Sk. Chamari is the Tibetan animal yak, Bos Grunions.
- 4 The Maurya palace probably existed when the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hion visited Pāṭaliputra at the end of the 4th century A.C. Dr. Spooner thought that the palace was probably built on the model of the Imperial Persian palace at Persepolis. App. B.
- 5 Dhurya—The yoke carried by the bull is frequently compared in Sanskrit literature to the responsible and onerous burden of administration.
- 6 St. 4. True sympathy cannot be switched on and off, like an electric current, as one might say in those days, and anyone who identifies himself with the fate of others is robbed to a great extent of his own freedom. The dramatist depicts the character of Chandragupta as instinct with that humility which is the very fibre of greatness—a loyalty of spirit which is content to serve, and in that service is lifted to the full stature of manhood.
- 7 Gangā—the river Ganges. The Ganges in spate carries all before it. In a thunder of water and foam it follows its blind course until it plunges at long last into the sea. Names of rivers are in the feminine gender in Sanskrit; the sea to which all rivers are drawn is poetically described as their lord. The river Gangā is still respectfully referred to as the lady Gangā—Gangā-ji. From Gangā-ji is probably derived the English Ganges. For autumn birds on the river see App. C. Sārasa. ff.
- 8 Dhūrta—Originally a gamester in which sense the term occurs in the Rīg Veda which condemns cheating at gambling as a frequent offence. Later it came to mean a cheat or deceiver.
- 9 Veśa-nārī—a woman of the town. Veśa—quarter of the town open to the public. Ar. Śās. Bk. II ch. 27. The courtesans of Pāṭaliputra are frequently mentioned in stories in the Kāma-Śāstra, and Vasubandhu's drama Vāsavadattā (Gray's Ed. pp. 69, 76) and like the Greek Hetaera exercised a certain influence on society. The courtesan, through her backstairs influence, has played an important role in all ages in the history of monarchy. Prithu-jaghana, broad hips, of women were much admired in ancient India and Iran probably for the same reason as the bound feet of women in Old China. It was a sign of the social status of the upper classes whose women did no work and lived unhurried, undisturbed lives in the security of their homes.
- 10 The belief is still prevalent that snakes are revengeful by nature, that they harbour a grievance and return, in due course, to wreak vengeance on those who may have injured them.
- 11 St. 14. Vallabha—a favourite, courtier. Ar. Śās. Bk. II, Ch. 1.
- 12 Vibhūti—Splendour; here used ironically about the austere statesman who continues undisturbed to live the simple life of a Śrotriya, erudite Vedic scholar.
- 13 Duvā—Grass used in worship—cynodon dactylon, commonly called Dub in Hindustani.

- 14 **Simha-āsana**—Lion-throne. It is the symbol of royalty in India as was the dragon throne in China. Sk. *Simha* is probably derived from *Simba* the East African word for lion. It is noteworthy that on the soles of Mohonjo-daro various animals are represented, including the tiger and the elephant, but the lion is not to be found. The famous lion capital on the Maurya columns of *Asoka* found in situ at *Saranath* has been preserved in the Museum near the excavations.
- 15 **St. 19.** From the Hindu Kush to Ceylon, from the Arabian sea to the Bay of Bengal, India has always possessed one clear unity which is geographical. The Maurya empire which included Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Sistan possessed the 'scientific frontier' which in the last century British policy sought in vain to secure. King *Meghavarna* of Ceylon sent an embassy to *Pāṭaliputra* to the Emperor *Samudra-Gupta* about 360 A.C. laden with pearls and gems for which Ceylon has been renowned. This Buddhist King of Ceylon subsequently built a monastery at *Gaya* and a convent where the statue of *Buddha* was studded with gems.
- 16 **Chandragupta** speaks, as is customary with kings, in the plural.
- 17 **Vaitālika**—Bard. Bards still chant laudatory verses at the court of Indian princes and announce the time as they did in the old drama.
- 18 **Śiva and Viṣṇu.** St. 20 and 21 describe the Indian Autumn. The Indian year is divided into six seasons each of about two months' duration. *Āśvin* and *Kārttika* (September to November), after the close of the periodical monsoon, are the delightful months of *Śarad* or autumn. Autumn is compared in st. 20 to the body of *Śiva* who is portrayed, in art and legend, as an ascetic with braided curls and smeared with ashes. His garment is the elephant hide, he carries a garland of skulls, in his matted hair is borne the river *Gangā* and on his forehead he wears the crescent-moon. His laughter is a rare event. It is white for all good things among the Aryans were deemed to be white, all sinful things were described as black. St. 21 describes the awakening of *Viṣṇu*, the All-pervading One, after the four months (*Chāturmāsa*) from the 11th of *Aśadhā* to 11th of *Kārttika*, during which, in mythology, he lies recumbent on *Śeṣha* to awake in autumn. The serpent *Śeṣha*, symbol of wisdom, is also called *Ananta*, the endless or infinite. *Viṣṇu* is also called *Pitāmbara*—one who has swallowed space. Thus reeting on infinity is symbolic of *Viṣṇu* being beyond Space and Time. The minstrels are still fond of such exaggerated and artificial style in their panegyrics. App. C.
- 19 **St. 24.** 'The four oceans' is Indian *façon de parler*. That the Maurya empire extended from sea to sea is proved by the *Girnar Rock Edict* in *Kathiawad* fifty miles from the Arabian sea and the *Dhauli Edict* about the same distance from the Bay of Bengal. The southern limits of *Asoka's* empire extended beyond the places in the *Mysore State* where his *Edicts* have now been discovered. This area was probably conquered by *Chandragupta*. The ancient literature of South India contains references to the Maurya invasion. See *Dikshitar*, *Mauryan Polity* p. 58.

- 20 Svasti—Hail. Letters, especially in the rural areas, are still written in the identical form given here beginning with hail.
- 21 Adhyaksha—Superintendents of elephants and of the cavalry departments were important officials; the duties and responsibilities of their office are set out in Ar. Śās. Bk. II, ch. 30 and 31. For their salaries see Bk. V, ch. 3.
- 22 Vyāyāma—Military exercises. Ar. Śās. Bk. VI. Ch. 2.
- 23 Antah-kopa and Bāhya-kopa—Internal and external troubles; in this sense these terms are used in Ar. Śās. Bk. VIII Ch. 2.
- 24 Rājādhirāja—King of kings. See App. D.
- 25 The Nandas were the reputed owners of ninety-nine crore of gold coins; the legend of this hoard of gold is related in Kathāsarit-sāgara IV, 15. For extracts from Tamil literature referring to the hoards of the Nandas, see Dikshitar, Mauryan Polity, pp. 58 and 61.
- 26 St. 30. Tāndava—The cosmic dance of Śiva. The recent revival of dancing in India has made the Tāndava familiar. In the stanza Śiva is called Rudra the ancient Vedic god of the whirlwind. About Rudra and his Tāndava dance Grousset writes "Representing as he did the untamed forces of nature, it was quite in order that in the world of Hindu philosophy he should symbolize the powers of destruction which are at the basis of cosmic evolution, death being the very law of existence as a condition of life. In this superior wisdom transcending both good and evil, both kindness and cruelty, both being and not-being—a wisdom in fact of a Nietzschean order—lies the whole of Sivaism." Civilization of the East, India, Vol. II p. 186, and App. A.
- 27 St. 32. The King can do no wrong; the responsibility rests always with the ministers.
- 28 Vyāla—Rogue elephant; the term is used in this sense in the Ar. Śās. Bk. II, Ch. 32. It is significant that the minister is compared to the Yantri—controller in st. 32.

#### ACT IV

- 1 St. 3. In his poem Śiśupāla-vadha, XI. 6.—Māgha similarly compares the poet to a practical administrator.
- 2 The Indian view is that man can shape his future in this life and hereafter by right conduct. Human action is the necessary complement to Fate; the latter cannot proceed without the former any more than a cart, as the Hitopadeśa expresses it, can move with only one wheel. About Krishna's dialogue in the Bhagavad-Gītā, Prof. Macdonell says "the burden of his teaching is that the zealous performance of his duty is a man's most important task, to whatever caste he may belong. The beauty and the power of the language in which this direction is inculcated is unsurpassed in any other work of Indian literature."

- 3 St. 5. Malayaketu conformed to the funeral practice of the Indians. These included libation to the Manes. Funeral customs are strictly followed to this day. Max Müller observes: "the absence of such services for the dead and of ancestral commemorations is a real loss in our own religion." The view expressed by Malayaketu in stanzas 5 and 6 may be compared with the view of Admiral Lord Fisher whom Epstein thus describes in his Autobiography. He "was a typical man of war. He made no bones about it. War was terrible, and should be terrible, and some of his characteristic sayings bear out his ruthless outlook. Of an enemy he would say that "he would make his wife a widow and his home a dunghill." pp. 88-89.
- 4 Dvāra—door. Access to the high and mighty generally lies through the 'door' of those who have gained their confidence; hence it means "through the medium of" in which sense it is currently used in the provincial languages.
- 5 Vyāsana—A technical term explained in Ar. Śās. Bk. VIII Ch. I which deals with the calamities of the elements of sovereignty; one of the elements is a minister.
- 6 St. 13. The commentator Dhundirāja writes that the figure is taken from the old game of dancers and tumblers.
- 7 Stanan-dhaya—infant at the breast. For the powers of Ministers and the Crown see App. D.
- 8 St. 16. Soṇa—The Sone river. Marching from the north-west to Bihar the invader would have to cross the Sone.
- 9 This ancient way of summoning a servant still survives e.g. in the Hindustani 'Koi hai !'
- 10 Kṣhapanaka—The Jain monks of the Digambara order was nude. The spy Jivasiddhi was probably dressed as a Śvetambari who wore white raiment.
- 11 Arhat—Epithet of the founder of Jainism; the term is used also by the Buddhists for their Teachers and occurs in the Vinaya-piṭaka.
- 12 Śrāvaka—literally one who listens, a layman; in current use for the Jain laity.
- 13 Bhadanta—designation of a Jain or Buddhist monk; currently used among Buddhist monks and scholars.
- 14 The belief still prevails that the day of the full moon is inauspicious for the start of a journey.
- 15 "This reply has nothing strange to those who know the sturdy self-importance of Hindu ascetics and especially of the Yatis, when of any consideration in their own sect." Wilson.
- 16 For Sun worship in India see App. C.
- 17 "The trees in the garden cast their shadows towards the west, where the sun is going, hence they are supposed to act as it were, as the sun's devoted servants. In the evening the sun goes towards the west, while the shadows lengthen towards the east, and hence are supposed to desert him in adversity." Telang.



## ACT V

- 1 St. 2. Loké—in this world. The Arhats' practice of righteousness led to salvation here and now ; salvation was not a matter to be realized after death in some other world.
- 2 The practice of shaving on days considered auspicious is still prevalent in rural areas in some parts of India.
- 3 Passport. See Ar. Śās. Bk. II, ch. 6. There were passports for travel within the empire as well as abroad during the Maurya period. In the Gupta age there seems to have been greater civil liberty judging from the account of Fa-hien who mentions, with relief, the freedom of movement in India as compared with contemporary China. See App. C. The ancient system to check ingress and egress out of the state continued longest in Kashmir.
- 4 Gulma-sthāna—watch and ward station. Sthāna survives through the Prākṛit thāna, which occurs in the play, in the modern Thana—police station.
- 5 Sa-nikāram. For the various offences the Artha Śāstra prescribes appropriate forms of disgrace when the offender was paraded in public with ignominy.
- 6 Rākshasa—originally a Vedic term for the goblins who disturbed the Vedic sacrifices of the Ārya colonists and attacked them to satisfy their own craving for human flesh ; hence an ogre.
- 7 St. 8. The terms used in this passage are from Ar. Śās. Bk. VII ch. 1 which deals with power politics, belligerency and neutrality.
- 8 Vāchika—oral message together with a written document ; Ar. Śās. Bk. II, ch. 10.
- 9 Third degree methods to extort confessions are described in Ar. Śās. Bk. IV ch. 8 "On the removal of thorns." App. D. Prison.
- 10 St. 10. For the technical terms of Logic and the method of the Indian syllogism see App. C.
- 11 St. 11. The van, rear and like military terms are ancient. The art of war was early developed in India. Military studies which were systematically pursued were an important part of the curriculum for the education of princes. The Indian army consisted of infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants. The game of chess, called in Sanskrit Chaturanga, the four limbed army, was a Kriegspiel in which the infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants led by the King, supported by the Minister, encountered the opponent's army similarly constituted. The Iranians and Arabs learnt the Indian game and called it Shatranj which, through the Arabs, later spread in Europe. For the tribes mentioned see App. C.
- 12 St. 16. Ornaments are part of the royal regalia. Princes were trained to appreciate and appraise various kinds of pearls, gems and precious stones.

- 13 St. 19. *rākshasa* recites as follows :—  
 The Maurya, scion of my former master,  
 Would claim my subservience,  
 While you are the son of my friend .  
 Donor of wealth he would be for me,  
 While I would give you,  
 In accordance with my own views.  
 Servitude ceremoniously exalted,  
 Would, indeed, be the office of minister  
 There for me ; while here it would be autocracy.  
 For what selfish ends surpassing even this,  
 Has ambition urged me to act,  
 In the manner of a knave ?
- 14 St. 20. The deterministic view of life is not peculiar to India. Sophocles had announced that *Moirā*, dark fate, held power over gods and men alike, and he was later supported by Zeno. In our own time Thomas Hardy has presented man as helpless in the clutches of circumstance while Anatole France has lamented the slavery of intellect.
- 15 For sale of flesh and laughter houses, See Ar. Śāś. Bk. II, 26, App. C.
- 16 " Part of the answer made by the Athenians to the messenger of Darius, who demanded earth and water " Wilson. In later times the oral orders of kings were not favoured. According to the *Sūkra-Nītisāra* a king who issues oral orders is regarded as a thief in law. See Edition of Oppert II, 293.
- 17 *Lodhra*—the flower *symplocos racemosa*. Powdered petals of the fragrant *Lodhra* were used to perfume wine, see Ar. Śāś. Bk. II, ch. 25. Women in Kashmir used as toilet powder, *poudre de riz* (*Sāli-ohūrṇa*), Kalhaṇa's *Rājataranginī* VIII 140.

## ACT VI

- 1 *Kesin*—The demon sent by the king of Mathurā, Kamsa, to destroy *Krishṇa*. The story is related in *Bhāgavata* X, 37.
- 2 St. 2. " When one meets an old friend one's wine intestines widen " Chinese proverb. See App. E, for wines used in Ancient India.
- 3 *Priya-darshana*. It is interesting to find the Maurya Emperor thus referred to. In the Pāli form *Piya-dasi* the expression is now very familiar through the inscriptions of Chandragupta's grandson, the Emperor *Aśoka*, who was the Constantine of Buddhism. In 1915 Beadon discovered the Maski inscription in the Raichur district of the Nizam's dominions. The first line of this remarkable inscription records *Devānām piyasa Asokasa* and thus the King *Piyadasi* of the inscriptions was identified definitely with *Aśoka*.
- 4 For the technical terms of dramaturgy *mukha*—mouth beginning and *Nirvahaṇa*—dénouement see App. A.

- 5 St. 4. There is a *double entendre* on the word six-fold which refers to the ropo as well as to the six-fold royal policy described in Ar. Śās. Bk. VI, ch. 2 which deals with Peace and Diplomatic Pressure. The term is used in this sense in Aot VII st. 13.
- 6 St. 5. Remarriage within the gotra of the husband was allowed. Ar. Śās. Bk. III, ch. 4. To remarry outside such gotra was an offence. Gotra—lineage, descended from a common ancestor See App. C.
- 7 St. 8. "The idea is the same as that of the familiar Latin adage, *quem deus vult perdere prius dementat*" Tōlang.
- 8 Chala-Lakshya—moving target. In the Sakuntalā of Kālidāsa the chase is described in Act. II, st. 5 "the arrows which find their mark in moving targots" (Lakshye chale). The term occurs in Ar. Śās. Bk. I, ch. 21 and Bk. VIII ch. 3.
- 9 St. 10. The new moon is adored by Indians. It is customary to wish on seeing the new moon. Kalhaṇa, Rājataranginī VII 130, VIII 798.
- 10 St. 12. and 13. The brotherly love for trees in India may be the survival of tree worship. In ancient Gaul and Britain the trees were sacred and the mistletoe of oak was gathered for worship. "With their flowers and fruits the trees who were like house-holders were felled; and by the bees who were as it were members of their family were mourned at every step" Kalhaṇa VII, 1224.
- 11 The goldsmiths and gold work off Pāṭaliputra were apparently very famous. References to them have been found in Tamil literature of the Sangam period e.g., "May you be rewarded by gold abounding Pāṭaliputra, where white-tusked elephants batho in the waters of the Sonai" Kurundogai. Reference to gold and goldsmiths is furnished by Perunkadaī 58,42.
- 12 Self-immolation. The Indian gymno-sophist (Yogi) Kalanos who accompanied Alexander the Great from the Panjab to Sousa burnt himself to death voluntarily "On the day appointed the devotee ascended the pyre and perished in its flames; exhibiting throughout serene fortitude and self-possession which greatly astonished the Macedonians who attended in throngs to witness this strange spectacle." MacCrindle, Invasion of India by Alexander, Preface. Strabo on the authority of Nicolaus of Damascus states that an Indian King sent an embassy to Augustus. One of the members of the embassy burnt himself to death at Athens in 20 B.C. According to Plutarch: "The tomb of the Indian was shown as one of the sights at Athens to strangers." Vit. Alex. 69.
- 13 St. 16 is in Śikharinī metre; each line is a question by Rākshasa to which the answers are given in prose. Janapada—Administrative area where public opinion was respected. See App. E under Karma and the State.
- 14 Mitra-Vatsala—affectionately indulgent towards friends. "A remarkable.....principle, is the inviolable and devoted fidelity which appears as the uniform characteristic of servants, emissaries and friends—a singular feature in the Hindu character which it has not yet wholly lost." Wilson.

- 15 St. 18. The story of the King who saved the life of the pigeon at the risk of his own is variously told. In the Mahābhārata, it is related that the King was Uśinara, son of Śibi though elsewhere in that great epic (Bk. III) it is told of Śibi himself and in Bk. XIII of Vṛishadarbha, a son of Śibi. For Uśinara see Act VII, St. 5.

#### ACT VII

- 1 Chandāla—Executioner; originally a low caste entrusted with the work of execution. Hence currently a brutal person, a vandal. Also called Śvapāka in this Act and in the Artha Śāstra.
- 2 St. 2 This seems to be based on the view expressed in the Artha Śāstra.
- 3 This stage-direction gives a picture of the past. The victim was given a wreath. See Act II, st. 21 and Act VII st. 4.
- 4 Anu-gamana—literally going after, following in death. This ancient custom of the Scytho-Tartars, among whom it was usual for vassals and liegemen upon the death of their lord to kill themselves, spread to India and as far as distant Japan. In China the Turkish Khans, vassals of the T'angs, used to commit suicide on the corpse of the Emperor. A knight was expected to die fighting, and his lady and vassals to remain true to the traditions of loyalty by following him in death. Thus a woman of quality gave up her life for the sake of a principle of honour. The honourable end was the one thing which could not be taken from a person of high birth. Bāṇa condemned the practice of Anugamana, in his Sanskrit novel Kādambarī, in the sixth century, as futile and wrong.
- 5 Bāla—a minor under sixteen years.
- 6 Mūrdhni āghrāya—literally smelling the forehead.
- 7 Beating the bosom. This ancient Scythian and Iranian custom during mourning still survives in the provinces which were long under Scythian subjection. App. D. The poets of Mahārāṣṭra, e.g., Tukaram, have commented on this custom which is still prevalent in Gujerat and Kathiawad. The pearl merchant's family was probably from Gujerat. Telang thought the name Chandana-dāsa was Gujeratī.
- 8 St. 5. For King Uśinara and the pigeon see *ante* Act VI St. 18, note. The acts of the Buddhas as related in the Jātaka stories are considered the highest examples of courage, righteousness and philanthropy.
- 9 St. 6. Saṭā—mane. The belief that the Indian lion is maneless is erroneous. The maned lion is called Kesarī from Kesara—mane.
- 10 Durātmā—wicked soul; mahātmā—great soul.
- 11 St. 7. Kāmandaka, author of a famous work on Political Science, mentions Chāṇakya learned in all the sciences as his Āchārya, spiritual teacher. Prof. Jacobi places Kāmandaka in the 3rd century A.C.

- 12 Javanikā-curtain. Some Western scholars thought that this term was the Prākṛit form of Yavanikā—the Greek curtain. From this they concluded that the Indian theatre was probably borrowed from Greece. See App. E under Surunga.
- 13 The touch of the Chandāla meant pollution as early as the 4th century B.C. See Ar. Śās. Bk. I, ch. 14 where apparently separate wells for Chandālas are referred to. Chanakya was expected to either embrace Rākhasa or by way of greeting, at least to take both the hands of R. in his own. In Kālidāsa's plays, the stage direction for such a gesture is Hastau spriṣṭah—Both touch hands. The practice of touching hands is probably of Central Asiatic origin and is current especially in the north-west and west of India. "We had to adapt ourselves to the Turki method of greeting in which each party takes both the other's hands in both of his and then steps back, bowing slightly and strokes his beard with a graceful, deprecating gesture. The clean shaven must make the same gesture as the hirsute." Peter Fleming, News from Tartary p. 221.
- 14 Samyoga—co-operation.
- 15 St. 11. For the powers of ministers see App. D.
- 16 Amātya-mukhya—literally spokesman of the ministers; prime minister.
- 17 St. 12. For legends, Greek and Indian, relating to the early life of Chandragupta, see App. D.
- 18 St. 13. Shādgūṇya—Six-fold policy see Ar. Śās. Bk. VII, ch. 1.
- 19 Dravya—Amenable to discipline, and Jigishu—ambitious to conquer, are obviously taken from Ar. Śās. Bk. VI, ch. 2. Netā—leader, from Ni—to lead, is in current use for leaders of modern political organizations.
- 20 St. 15. This stanza is based on the chapter in the care of elephants in Ar. Śās. Bk. II, ch. 31, 32.
- 21 Durga-pāla, it was for the Minister of defence to release prisoners.
- 22 Nagara-Śreṣṭhin—This designation survives in Western India where the Nagar-Seth is the Chairman of the local chamber of commerce.
- 23 Ar. Śās. Bk. II Ch. 36 contains recommendations for release of prisoners on occasions of rejoicing. "The general release ordered is the traditional mode of signaling an occasion of rejoicing which is still observed at the courts of Indian princes and was observed partially by the British Government on the occasion of the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India." Telang.
- 24 For the Boar incarnation of Vishṇu see App. C. There are several versions of the story of the Deluge. In the Satapathā Brāhmaṇa a fish guides Manu's boat to the northern mountain. This is reproduced in the Mahābhārata. The King mentioned in this verse is probably Chandra-Gupta II (375-413 A.C.) of the Imperial Gupta dynasty.



# INDEX

Abhisheka .. .. .	205, 252
Abul Fazl .. .. .	223
Academy .. .. .	246
Achaemenids .. .. .	191, 214, 224
Adhyaksha .. .. .	256
Afghans .. .. .	212
Afghanistan .. .. .	212, 213, 227-29
Agnimitra .. .. .	167
Ain-i-Akbari .. .. .	223
Ajanta .. .. .	205
Ajātaśatru .. .. .	164, 194
Akbar .. .. .	186
Alasanda, of the Yonas .. .. .	212
Alberuni .. .. .	157, 216, 228, 230
Alexander the Great .. .. .	x, 191, 225
Nandrus .. .. .	192
his Indian Campaign .. .. .	191-592
,, ,, Successors .. .. .	192
Alphabet, .. .. .	158-59
See Script.	
Amātya .. .. .	251
Amitraghāta .. .. .	226
Anugamana .. .. .	261
Arms.. .. .	218
Army .. .. .	193, 218
Armour .. .. .	251
Arochosia .. .. .	193, 213
Artha Śāstra .. .. .	iii, 198
Ārya .. .. .	xiv, 246
Āsana .. .. .	247
Asoka .. .. .	166, 203, 259
Astronomy, .. .. .	177
and the Arabs .. .. .	177
Āsvaghosha ... .. .	155

Asylum	..	..	..	..	..	..	250
Augury	..	..	..	..	..	..	175
Bactrian Greek	..	..	..	..	..	..	166, 226
Badaoni	..	..	..	..	..	..	186
Bālhika	..	..	..	..	..	..	212
Bāna	..	..	..	..	..	173, 184,	261
Baniya	..	..	..	..	..	..	250
Bard	..	..	..	..	..	..	255
Bardaxema	..	..	..	..	..	..	232
Barygaza	..	..	..	..	..	..	155
Baveru Jātaka	..	..	..	..	..	..	181
Beal	..	..	..	..	..	..	234
Beard	..	..	..	..	..	..	252, 258
Beating the bosom	..	..	..	..	..	..	261
Begram	..	..	..	..	..	..	229-31
Belligerent	..	..	..	..	..	..	258
Benefit of Clergy	..	..	..	..	..	..	250
Bhadanta	..	..	..	..	..	..	257
Bhandarkar Sir R. G.	..	..	..	..	..	..	179, 189
„ Dr. D. R.	..	..	..	..	..	..	180
Bhāsa	..	..	..	..	..	..	152
Birch bark	..	..	..	..	..	..	249
Bloch	..	..	..	..	..	..	154
Boar incarnation	..	..	..	..	..	..	189, 262
Bopp	..	..	..	..	..	..	vi
Brahmī	..	..	..	..	..	..	158-61
See Script.							
Broach	..	..	..	..	..	..	155
Brotherly love of trees	..	..	..	..	..	..	260
Brihaspati	..	..	..	..	..	..	247
Buddha	..	..	..	..	..	164, 168, 206, 227,	235
„ Image	..	..	..	..	..	..	227
Buddhist Afghanistan	..	..	..	..	..	228-30,	234
Bühler	..	..	..	..	..	..	158
Cabinet of ministers	..	..	..	..	..	..	207
Canal	..	..	..	..	..	..	195, 198

Caste..	..	..	..	..	..	..	xiv, 193, 194
Census	..	..	..	..	..	..	199
Chāmara	..	..	..	..	..	..	254
Chamberlain	..	..	..	..	..	..	251
Chāṇakya	..	..	..	..	..	xi, xii, xiv,	197-98
Chandāla	..	..	..	..	..	..	261
Chandra	..	..	..	..	..	..	248
Chandragupta,	..	..	..	..	..	..	192
Sandrocottus,							xi
legends,							194, 196
origin,							195
,, Vikramāditya	..	..	..	..	..	..	171, 211
Changing political views of Statesmen	..	..	..	..	..	..	104
Charms	..	..	..	..	..	..	251
Charsadda	..	..	..	..	..	..	232
Cheat	..	..	..	..	..	..	254
Chess	..	..	..	..	..	..	258
China	..	..	..	..	..	..	233
China and India	..	..	..	..	..	..	v, 236
Chinese pilgrims	..	..	..	..	..	..	168
,, proverbs	..	..	..	..	..	..	x, 259
Chitragupta	..	..	..	..	..	..	249
Churning of the Ocean	..	..	..	..	..	..	176
Coins..	..	..	..	..	..	..	206, 218
Courtesan	..	..	..	..	..	..	254
Covering the ears	..	..	..	..	..	..	250
Crown, powers of,	..	..	..	..	..	..	257
Cypriots	..	..	..	..	..	..	225
Dance of Śhiva	..	..	..	..	..	..	160-61, 256
Dancers and Tumblers	..	..	..	..	..	..	257
Dāsa, Dasyu	..	..	..	..	..	..	xiv
Date of Signet Ring	..	..	..	..	..	..	171
Dead, disposal of,	..	..	..	..	..	..	215
exposure of,							215
Death sentence	..	..	..	..	..	..	250
Death by torture	..	..	..	..	..	..	252
Debater and General compared	..	..	..	..	..	..	187



Deluge, story of .. .. .	189, 262
Demoiselle Crane .. .. .	181
Demon, .. .. .	273
„ Kesin .. .. .	259
Descent of the Ganges .. .. .	159
Determinism .. .. .	259
Devanāgarī .. .. .	142
Devī—Chandragupta .. .. .	171-74
Dharma .. .. .	248
Dharma-pāla .. .. .	168
Disarmament .. .. .	241
Divorce .. .. .	199
Document .. .. .	249
Door .. .. .	257
Drama .. .. .	ix-x
„ foreign influence .. .. .	155
„ misconceptions .. .. .	151, 154
„ origin .. .. .	151
Dravya .. .. .	262
Dress fashions .. .. .	209
Dub grass .. .. .	254
Durant Will.. .. .	153
Durga-pāla .. .. .	250
Duties of Kings .. .. .	205
Eobatana .. .. .	170
Eclipse .. .. .	247
Elephant, .. .. .	177
Care of, .. .. .	147, 262
Rogue, .. .. .	250, 256
Perfume, .. .. .	251
Embracing to greet .. .. .	253
Ephthalite Huns .. .. .	182, 220
Executioner .. .. .	261
Fa-hien .. .. .	234
Family .. .. .	246
Firdausi .. .. .	218

Fleet .. .. .	189
Flesh eating, .. .. .	217, 223
„ sale of, .. .. .	259
Fortune .. .. .	251
Foucher .. .. .	196, 228
Four Oceans .. .. .	255
Full moon festival .. .. .	253
Funeral ceremony .. .. .	257
Gambling .. .. .	199, 254
Gamester .. .. .	254
Gaṇa, republic .. .. .	70, 200
Gandha-gaja .. .. .	251
Gandhāra .. .. .	183
Gandharan Sculpture .. .. .	227
Ganges .. .. .	254
„ Descent of, .. .. .	159
Garland of flowers .. .. .	217, 253
Gāthā .. .. .	252
Geiger .. .. .	212
Gems .. .. .	255, 258
Gir Forest .. .. .	178
Girnar .. .. .	172, 203
Gold .. .. .	256
Goldsmith .. .. .	260
Gondapharnes .. .. .	206, 227
Gotra .. .. .	188, 260
Goose .. .. .	182
Grammar .. .. .	157
Graeco-Buddhist Art .. .. .	227
Greece and India .. .. .	vii, 152, 224
Greek, yavana .. .. .	183, 212, 252
„ coins .. .. .	206
„ invasions .. .. .	191
„ Grousset .. .. .	161, 234, 256
Guṇādhya .. .. .	163
Gupta age .. .. .	177, 189
„ empire .. .. .	167, 189

Hackin J.	..	..	..	..	..	..	229-30
Hail	..	..	..	..	..	..	256
Haoma	..	..	..	..	..	..	217
Harahavaiti	..	..	..	..	..	..	213
Harshaoharita	..	..	..	..	..	..	173
Hataka	..	..	..	..	..	..	252
Hillebrandt	..	..	..	..	..	iii, 173,	237
Hindu	..	..	..	..	..	..	211
Honey Bee	..	..	..	..	..	..	180, 252
Horse	..	..	..	..	..	xiv, 124, 149,	221
,, Persian	..	..	..	..	..	..	210
Hsuan Tsang	..	..	..	..	..	168, 175, 196, 228,	234
Human endeavour and Karma	..	..	..	..	..	..	231, 256
Huns..	..	..	..	..	..	..	182, 220
Hunting	..	..	..	..	..	..	128, 217, 260
Ichor of elephants	..	..	..	..	..	..	124
Income tax	..	..	..	..	..	..	199, 253
Indian cavalry contribution to culture	..	..	..	..	..	..	152-53, 218
,, Missionaries	..	..	..	..	..	..	233
,, Mythology	..	..	..	..	..	..	176, 160
,, Play house	..	..	..	..	..	..	154
,, Troops	..	..	..	..	..	..	214, 224
Indo-Iranian period	..	..	..	..	..	..	214-15
Indo-Scythian kings	..	..	..	..	..	..	227
Indus	..	..	..	..	..	..	211
Initiation ceremony	..	..	..	..	..	..	253
Ink	..	..	..	..	..	..	249
Intermarriage	..	..	..	..	..	..	194, 226
Internal, external troubles	..	..	..	..	..	..	256
Iran,	..	..	..	..	..	..	210, 213
cavalry,	..	..	..	..	..	..	210
language	..	..	..	..	..	..	213
I-tsing	..	..	..	..	..	..	235
Jacobi	..	..	..	..	..	..	201
Jain	..	..	..	..	..	..	165, 178
Janapada	..	..	..	..	..	..	260

Javanikā	..	..	..	..	..	..	225, 262
Jayaswal	..	..	..	..	..	..	166, 195, 231
Ji, honorific suffix	..	..	..	..	..	..	246
Jolly	..	..	..	..	..	..	224
Jones, Sir W.	..	..	..	..	..	..	v, x
Junagarh	..	..	..	..	..	..	178, 221
Judicial Procedure	..	..	..	..	..	..	180
Jyotish	..	..	..	..	..	..	248
Kabul,							
Hindu Kings of	..	..	..	..	..	..	228
Kabulistan,							
and Kabul valley	..	..	..	..	..	..	227
Kalanos	..	..	..	..	..	..	260
Kali age	..	..	..	..	..	..	142
Kālidāsa	..	..	..	..	..	..	174
Kāma,							160
his arrows of flowers	..	..	..	..	..	..	160
Kamalā	..	..	..	..	..	..	251
Kāmboja	..	..	..	..	..	..	212
Kanishka	..	..	..	..	186, 206, 223, 228, 230, 233	..	233
Kapīśā	..	..	..	..	..	..	217, 229
Kāsa	..	..	..	..	..	..	184, 251
Kathi	..	..	..	..	..	..	221
Kathiawar, ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	178, 221
republics of	..	..	..	..	..	..	xv, 200
Kautilya	..	..	..	..	..	..	247
Kāyastha	..	..	..	..	..	..	248
Keith	..	..	..	..	..	..	152
Ketu	..	..	..	..	..	..	176
Khāraṇḍavela	..	..	..	..	..	..	195
Khāroshthi	..	..	..	..	..	..	159
Khaśa	..	..	..	..	..	..	182
' King can do no wrong '	..	..	..	..	..	..	256
King of Kings	..	..	..	..	..	..	206, 256
Koi hai !	..	..	..	..	..	..	257
Konow	..	..	..	..	..	..	173
Kshapaṇaka	..	..	..	..	..	..	248, 257

Kshatrapa .. .. .	211
Kubera .. .. .	250
Kubha,	
Kabul River .. .. .	213
Kulu Valley .. .. .	213
Kushāna .. .. .	227
,, period .. .. .	228
Kusumapura .. .. .	xiii
Lady of the Twilight .. .. .	160
Lakshmī .. .. .	251
Leaf .. .. .	249
Legend of Pātaliputra .. .. .	163
Levi. S. .. .. .	151, 155, 167, 235
Lion, .. .. .	176
its mane .. .. .	261
Lion-throne .. .. .	255
Lodhra .. .. .	259
Loose Hair .. .. .	247
Lotus .. .. .	247
Love of trees .. .. .	260
Macdonell .. .. .	iv, vii, 159, 162, 225, 231
Machiavelli .. .. .	iii
Magadha .. .. .	162, 164
Magian .. .. .	215, 216
Magistrate .. .. .	250
Mahārāja .. .. .	70, 172
Maṇḍala .. .. .	250
Manes .. .. .	257
Mantra .. .. .	251
Māra .. .. .	179
Marquis of Zetland .. .. .	205
Marriage .. .. .	193, 226
Maski inscription .. .. .	259
Maurya .. .. .	191
,, antiquities .. .. .	208
,, and the Greeks .. .. .	225

Maurya Origin .. .. .	196
,, Palace .. .. .	254
,, Pillared Hall .. .. .	169
Means and Ends .. .. .	202
Megasthenes .. .. .	164
Menander .. .. .	167
Meyer .. .. .	vii
Milinda Panho .. .. .	167
Military terms .. .. .	258
Minister, .. .. .	251
qualifications .. .. .	204-5
powers of, .. .. .	204, 262
responsibility of, .. .. .	256
Minister of Defence .. .. .	250, 262
Minor .. .. .	261
Mis-en-scene .. .. .	160, 246
Mixed marriages .. .. .	162, 194, 225
Mlechha .. .. .	247
Monarchy .. .. .	201, 208
originally elective .. .. .	xv, 201
Monir Williams .. .. .	155
Moon Lotus .. .. .	248
Moving target .. .. .	260
Mricchakatika .. .. .	vii
Mudrā .. .. .	249
Mudrā-rākshasa .. .. .	xi
Mughals .. .. .	223
Mukha .. .. .	259
Mukhya .. .. .	200
Music .. .. .	246
Nachiketas .. .. .	179
Nagarn .. .. .	xiii
Nagar seth .. .. .	262
Nāgaraka .. .. .	253
Nālanda .. .. .	235
Nanda, .. .. .	196
,, dynasty .. .. .	152, 191

Nanda, gold	..	..	..	..	..	..	250, 256
„ new	..	..	..	..	..	..	195
„ nine	..	..	..	..	..	..	194
Nandrus	..	..	..	..	..	..	192
Nāndī	..	..	..	..	..	..	247
National Resurgence	..	..	..	..	..	..	232
Nāṭya Śāstra	..	..	..	..	..	..	154
Neutral	..	..	..	..	..	..	258
Now moon	..	..	..	..	..	..	128, 260
Niese..	..	..	..	..	..	..	151
Non-violence	..	..	..	..	..	..	232
Oath, vow	..	..	..	..	..	..	76, 89, 247
Om, Aum	..	..	..	..	..	..	185
Omens	..	..	..	..	..	..	175
Oral message	..	..	..	..	..	..	258-59
Origin of drama	..	..	..	..	..	..	151
Oxus	..	..	..	..	..	..	220, 221, 233
„ horse from the	..	..	..	..	..	..	221
Paintings	..	..	..	..	..	..	205, 228
Palm-leaf	..	..	..	..	..	..	249
Pandit, S. P.	..	..	..	..	..	..	iii, 244
Pāṇini	..	..	..	..	..	..	xiii, 157, 213
Pārasika	..	..	..	..	..	..	210, 249
Parishad	..	..	..	..	..	..	xv, 165, 204, 246
Pashto	..	..	..	..	..	..	163, 167, 213
Passport	..	..	..	..	..	..	258
Pāṭaliputra,	..	..	..	..	..	..	xiii
„ Kusumapura	..	..	..	..	..	..	xiii
„ Palibothra	..	..	..	..	..	..	xi
„ Pushpapura	..	..	..	..	..	..	xiii
„ Excavations	..	..	..	..	..	..	169
„ Legend of	..	..	..	..	..	..	163
„ Persian influence	..	..	..	..	..	..	170
Patanjali	..	..	..	..	..	..	xiii, 152
Patna	..	..	..	..	..	..	xiii
Peach and Pear	..	..	..	..	..	..	228

Peacock .. .. .	181
Peshawar .. .. .	203, 228
Peucolaitis .. .. .	241
Plato .. .. .	224, 230
Poet and statesman compared .. .. .	80, 256
Poison maid .. .. .	247
Police Chief .. .. .	180, 250
„ State .. .. .	203
„ Station .. .. .	258
Policy of Statesmen and political exigency .. .. .	1, 91, 253
Political terms .. .. .	xv
Porbander .. .. .	232
Prachāra .. .. .	243
Premonitions .. .. .	268
Prime minister .. .. .	262
Prison .. .. .	203
Priya-darshana .. .. .	259
Purushapura .. .. .	228
Pushkalāvati .. .. .	232
Pushpapura .. .. .	xiii
Pushyamitra .. .. .	166
Quotations—Act I v 22 Act II v 17 & 18	
Queen Dhruva-devi .. .. .	171
Rāhu .. .. .	176
Rajah .. .. .	xv
Rājadharam .. .. .	208
Rākshasa .. .. .	258
Rawlinson .. .. .	225
Release of prisoners .. .. .	262
Religion .. .. .	184
Remarriage of Women .. .. .	174, 188, 260
Repression .. .. .	250
Republics .. .. .	200
Republics of Kathiawar .. .. .	xv, 200
Rice .. .. .	181, 246
Right of Asylum .. .. .	260, 266



Ring .. .. .	253
Rogue elephant .. .. .	250
Romaka .. .. .	177
Royal We .. .. .	255
Sacred thread .. .. .	253
Saha-Utthāyin .. .. .	248
Śaka .. .. .	183, 211, 216, 227
Śakasthāna .. .. .	183
Śakti .. .. .	252
Samgīta .. .. .	252
Sandrocottus .. .. .	x
Sanskrit language .. .. .	155-158
„ Mass .. .. .	ii
Sārasa .. .. .	181
Śasānka .. .. .	168
Sassanian empire .. .. .	214
„ influence .. .. .	211
Śastra .. .. .	6, 148, 198
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa .. .. .	162
Sati .. .. .	261
Satrap .. .. .	211
Sāvitṛī .. .. .	xiv
Script .. .. .	158-159
Brahmī, .. .. .	158
Khāroshthi .. .. .	158
Nāgarī .. .. .	158
Scylax .. .. .	224
Scythian .. .. .	183, 221, 229-30, 233
See Śaka	
Seal .. .. .	249
Seistan .. .. .	183, 211
Self-immolation .. .. .	260
Serpent's revenge .. .. .	61
Shaking hands .. .. .	262
Shaving .. .. .	258
Siam .. .. .	156, 235, 252
Śibi .. .. .	250, 261

Sikh	..	..	..	..	..	..	178
Silk	..	..	..	..	..	..	233
Sind	..	..	..	..	..	..	211
Śiva	..	..	..	..	..	..	255
„ Third eye	..	..	..	..	..	..	160
„ Nataraja	..	..	..	..	..	..	160
Sixfold policy	..	..	..	..	..	..	260, 262
Slaughter house	..	..	..	..	..	..	259
Snake	..	..	..	..	..	..	254
Snake catchers and kings	..	..	..	..	..	..	207
Snow-white	..	..	..	..	..	..	253
Soma	..	..	..	..	..	..	217
Somadeva	..	..	..	..	..	..	163
Sone River	..	..	..	..	..	..	xiii, 257
Song-yun, pilgrim	..	..	..	..	..	..	228, 234
Spells	..	..	..	..	..	..	251
Spooner	..	..	..	..	..	..	170, 215
Spy	..	..	..	..	..	..	248
Śrāvaka	..	..	..	..	..	..	257
Śreshthin	..	..	..	..	..	..	248
Stage-director	..	..	..	..	..	..	246
Stage-directions	..	..	..	..	..	..	ix, 261
Sun-worship	..	..	..	..	..	..	186, 257
Sungadynasty	..	..	..	..	..	..	166, 162
Superintendent of department	..	..	..	..	..	..	256
Surāshtra	..	..	..	..	..	..	172, 178
Surungā	..	..	..	..	..	..	224, 252
Swat	..	..	..	..	..	..	196
Syllogism	..	..	..	..	..	..	187
Syrinx	..	..	..	..	..	..	224
Takshaśilā	..	..	..	..	..	..	195
Tāṇḍava	..	..	..	..	..	..	160-61, 256
Tapovana	..	..	..	..	..	..	247
Tata, Sir Ratan	..	..	..	..	..	..	169
Taxila	..	..	..	..	..	..	195, 226
Telang K. P.	..	..	..	..	..	..	ii, 237
Thana	..	..	..	..	..	..	258

Thibaut .. .. .	177, 247
Third degree .. .. .	258
Thirst .. .. .	253
Tikshṇa .. .. .	248
Tolerance .. .. .	186, 203, 223
,, Edict .. .. .	203
Torture .. .. .	203
Transmigration .. .. .	231
Trees, .. .. .	260
at sunset .. .. .	257
Tripura .. .. .	160
Trivarga .. .. .	246
Tunnel .. .. .	252
Unity of India .. .. .	255
Upāya .. .. .	251
Vaishṇava faith .. .. .	162, 189
Van .. .. .	258
Vanik .. .. .	250
Varāhamihira .. .. .	177
Vatsa .. .. .	xiv, 247
Vatsala .. .. .	260
Vegetarianism .. .. .	188, 225
Victory slogan .. .. .	175, 249
Vikramāditya .. .. .	211
Vindhya .. .. .	94
Viś, canton .. .. .	201
Viśākha-datta .. .. .	i, v, 171
Vishṇu .. .. .	255
Vishṇugupta .. .. .	144, 198
Vonones .. .. .	227
Vrishala .. .. .	xiv
Vrishṇi .. .. .	251
Vyasana .. .. .	257
Vyāyāma .. .. .	256
Warfare .. .. .	219-220
Watch Station .. .. .	258

Wells H. G.	..	..	..	..	..	165
Whispering campaign	..	..	..	..	..	253
White Huns..	..	..	..	..	..	182, 220
Wilson. H. H.	..	..	..	ii, iii,	175, 253, 257, 259	
Windisch	..	..	..	..	..	151
Wine	..	..	..	..	216, 217, 259	
Winternitz	..	..	..	..	..	173
Woman,	..	..	..	..	..	251
„ of the town	..	..	..	..	..	254
Writing	..	..	..	..	..	249
Xandrames	..	..	..	..	..	248
Xerxes,	..	..	..	..	..	224
„ Indian troops of,	..	..	..	..	..	224
Yāgnavalkya	..	..	..	..	..	162
Yak tail	..	..	..	..	..	254
Yama	..	..	..	..	..	vii, 248
„ legend	..	..	..	..	..	179, 248
Yantra-toraṇa	..	..	..	..	..	253
Yavana	..	..	..	..	..	183, 212, 252
Yāska	..	..	..	..	..	201
Yoke	..	..	..	..	..	254
Yona..	..	..	..	..	..	212
Yueh-chi	..	..	..	..	..	222, 233
	..	..	..	..	..	
Zarathushtra	..	..	..	..	..	201, 216, 249
Zend,						
Avesta	..	..	..	..	..	213

